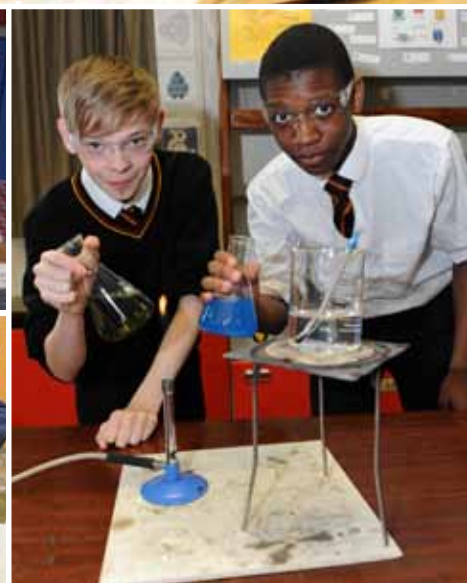


# The Education and Training Inspectorate

## Chief Inspector's Report 2010 - 2012



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## Inspection Evaluations

A number of quantitative terms are used in the report. These terms should be interpreted as follows:

Almost/nearly all	-	more than 90%
Most	-	75%-90%
A majority	-	50%-74%
A significant minority	-	30%-49%
A minority	-	10%-29%
Very few/a small number	-	less than 10%

In assessing the various features of provision, inspectors relate their evaluations to six descriptors as set out below:

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

## Preface

It is with great pleasure that I present my first report as Chief Inspector of the Education and Training Inspectorate, summarising inspection findings for the period from 1 April 2010 to 30 June 2012. I took up my role as Chief Inspector in May 2011 and this report covers a period of just over one year of my time in office. I must express my gratitude to my predecessor, Stanley Goudie, for his leadership as Chief Inspector during the first year of this reporting period.

The Education and Training Inspectorate's mission is, *'promoting improvement in the interest of all learners'*. We are totally learner-focused and make our evaluations in the interest of the learner, based on first-hand evidence. In addition to scheduled inspections of organisations and surveys<sup>1</sup>, the Education and Training Inspectorate plays a distinctive and crucial role in promoting improvement through district visits and other monitoring and evaluating inspection activity.

This report is written within the context of the significant financial challenges facing the budget in education and training; the need to have a well-qualified and appropriately skilled workforce; a widespread desire to create communities that can live, learn, work and share together; and a clear focus on improving the life chances for our most disadvantaged young people. This context has contributed towards identifying the three major themes of this



Noelle Buick, Chief Inspector

report: achieving value; learning skills; and transforming communities.

We have a sound education system that serves many of its learners effectively. It is important to report on the very good and outstanding provision that exists across the education and training sectors, so that organisations can learn from each other. Equally, where aspects of provision are not as good as they should be, it is important that these are identified and addressed swiftly in the interests of the learners.

The Education and Training Inspectorate comprises an experienced and professional group of people. It has been my privilege to lead the organisation over the last year and I look forward to continuing to deliver our vision to *'be a highly regarded and influential organisation, dedicated fully to the education and well-being of all learners'*, in the years to come.

*Noelle Buick*

**NOELLE BUICK**

Chief Inspector  
Education and Training Inspectorate

<sup>1</sup> Organisation reports and surveys are published on: [www.etini.gov.uk](http://www.etini.gov.uk)





## Context

1. The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) provides inspection services for a wide range of departments<sup>2</sup> and agencies. The three main departments, for which the ETI carries out most of its inspection work, are charged with developing the full potential of each individual so that they can play a positive role in their community and in the economy. This contributes to a key priority in the Programme for Government<sup>3</sup>, to deliver *'a vibrant economy which can transform our society while dealing with the deprivation and poverty which has affected some of our communities for generations'*.
2. The inspection services provided by the ETI reflect education and training that is designed to meet the needs of all members of society beginning with early years education, traversing primary and post-primary provision before emerging into an ever-expanding network of pathways to, and opportunities for, lifelong learning that includes work-based learning, further and higher education and the youth sector.
3. This Chief Inspector's Report is based on evidence from across the range of the ETI's inspection activity and the findings relate to the pre-school settings, schools and learning organisations inspected from 1 April 2010 to 30 June 2012. During this reporting period inspectors observed over 12,000 lessons and training sessions.
4. The themes of this report (achieving value; learning skills; and transforming communities) encompass key issues in education and training such as: the links between good public value and high achievements and standards for all learners; the need for learners to acquire and develop the skills which will help them address the many personal, social and economic challenges they face to enable them to compete in a global economy; and, the aspiration for education to transform the lives of individuals and communities for the better.

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2 The Department of Education's (DE) vision is 'every young person achieving to his or her full potential at each stage of his or her development'. The Department for Employment and Learning's (DEL) aim is 'to promote learning and skills, to prepare people for work and to support the economy'. The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure's (DCAL) vision is 'a confident, creative, informed and healthy society'. The ETI also carries out inspections for the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) and Criminal Justice Inspection (CJI)

3 The Programme for Government, 2011-15 - building a better future, (Northern Ireland Executive March 2012)



# Achieving Value

**To what extent does the education system in Northern Ireland achieve value?**

5. The current economic conditions, the significant financial demands facing education and other public services and the underachievement of too many of our young people present challenges for all education and training providers. Overall, the education system across Northern Ireland achieves good value, but its outcomes are too variable. While the majority of learners attain good outcomes, too many of our children and young people are failing to fulfil their potential. In order to achieve the best possible value for all our children and young people, inspection evidence has identified the following key challenges:
  - ♦ **improving the outcomes for learners in English and mathematics across all sectors, but particularly for those from disadvantaged backgrounds, where only 32% of all school leavers entitled to free school meals achieved the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) at grades A\* - C or equivalents in five subjects including English and mathematics in 2010-11;**
  - ♦ **improving the quality of leadership and management across all sectors and particularly in post-primary schools, where the quality was not good enough in around 39% of schools inspected;**
  - ♦ **improving the effectiveness of boards of governors in 20% of primary schools and 34% of post-primary schools; and**
  - ♦ **improving the quality of education and training provision; including more incisive and accurate self-evaluation and better sharing of good practice.**

**Achieving value:  
outcomes for learners, including  
English and mathematics**

6. The proportion of school leavers achieving at least five GCSEs at grades A\* - C, or equivalent, has improved from 64.7% in 2006-07 to 73.2% in 2010-11<sup>4</sup>. However, in the non-selective sector, the gap between schools with lower levels of free school meal eligibility<sup>5</sup> and those where 50% or more of pupils are eligible, is too high at 24.7 percentage points.
7. There is an improving trend in the number of pupils achieving five GCSEs at grades A\* - C, or equivalent, including English and mathematics, which has increased from 54.2% in 2006-07 to 59.5% in 2010-11. However, this figure is still too low. More worryingly, only 32% of those young people who are entitled to free school meals achieve five GCSEs A\* - C, or equivalent, including English and mathematics. This low level of achievement and the widening gap in outcomes are unacceptable.
8. Although it is clear that there is a link between free school meal

entitlement and outcomes at GCSE, many other factors have an impact on examination results. There are some schools in disadvantaged areas that perform well while others in more advantaged areas perform less well. Young people from disadvantaged areas need the very best schools and learning organisations if they are to achieve. The Programme for Government 2011-15 has set a challenging target for 2014-15, to improve the outcomes for young people entitled to free school meals to 49% achieving five GCSEs A\* - C, or equivalent, including English and mathematics. It is the responsibility of all learners and providers to work together towards meeting this target.

9. A significant issue related to outcomes at GCSE in non-selective schools concerns achievement in English and mathematics, but particularly mathematics. In non-selective schools only 22% of school leavers with free school meal entitlement achieved at least five GCSEs A\* - C or equivalent including English and mathematics, compared to 87% in selective schools during 2010-11. The need

<sup>4</sup> Qualifications and Destinations of Northern Ireland School Leavers 2010-11 (revised) - latest verified statistics

<sup>5</sup> Lower levels of FSME are defined as up to 29.99%



to improve these outcomes is a significant challenge. Achievement at GCE Advanced level was similar to the previous reporting period with 64.5% of year 14 pupils attaining three or more subjects at grades A\* - C.

10. Only 65.4% of school leavers achieve GCSE A\* - C in mathematics compared to 69.1% in English. It is important to increase achievements, in both subjects, for boys and girls. While girls are still outperforming boys overall, attainment in mathematics for girls is nine percentage points below that in English; 67.1% in mathematics and 76.1% in English. For boys the difference in achievement between the two subjects is just over one percentage point. There is a real need to focus on increasing achievements in mathematics for girls.
11. Mathematics is not only an important life skill, but it is also crucial in providing pupils with key educational pathways, particularly in STEM-related careers<sup>6</sup>. Worryingly, improvement in the quality of mathematics

provision and standards remains a priority across the sectors. It is particularly pertinent in post-primary schools, where some heads of mathematics departments take insufficient responsibility for leading improvement and sharing best practice in teaching, learning and assessment. The quality of leadership and management of post-primary mathematics departments, and particularly the quality of processes for monitoring and evaluation, were identified as areas for improvement in *Follow-up to Better Mathematics*<sup>7</sup>. Inspection evidence indicates that in almost 50% of mathematics departments, leadership and management required improvement.

12. By contrast, the quality of leadership and management in post-primary English departments evaluated as good or better increased from 61% to 71% over the reporting period. However, literacy co-ordinators, heads of departments and teachers of English in post-primary schools need to have a more secure understanding of the primary school curriculum and

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<sup>6</sup> Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. See recommendation 6 and conclusion 10 of the STEM Review (DEL & DE, 2009)

<sup>7</sup> Follow-up to Better Mathematics (ETI, 2010)

the pupils' achievements, upon entry into year 8. These key middle-managers need to use more effectively the range of available data, share best practice and develop a whole-school approach to supporting the literacy needs of all learners.

13. A trend that is emerging from the Achieving Belfast<sup>8</sup> and Achieving Derry (Bright Futures)<sup>9</sup> programmes shows that targeted support for English and mathematics is having a positive impact on outcomes in both primary and post-primary settings. The inspection evidence and the accompanying quantitative and benchmarked data indicate that, overall, good progress is being made. The outcomes for pupils in literacy and numeracy at key stage (KS) 2 are improving. Fewer pupils are leaving the schools in the programmes with no GCSEs and more pupils are achieving five or more GCSEs at grades A\* - C.
14. Overall success rates across the further education sector have increased to 70%<sup>10</sup> in 2010-11,

while the average retention rates have remained steady at around 88%. While average retention rates vary across the work-based learning sector, they are good overall at 71%. The overall achievement rates for the sector, including the ApprenticeshipsNI programme, are good at 81%. These key performance indicators represent increased value for these sectors as a consequence of improvements in leadership and management, which focuses more systematically on quality improvement and self-evaluation processes to identify and address underperformance and underachievement.

### **Achieving value: leadership and management**

15. All leaders face significant challenges with regard to managing budgets and ensuring viability through stable enrolments and good quality educational experiences and outcomes, while delivering public value in the context of change. Leaders must give priority to the individual

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8 The Achieving Belfast programme was launched in January 2008 in the Belfast Education and Library Board, to address low and underachievement, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Initially five post-primary and 14 primary schools were involved

9 The Achieving Derry (Bright Futures) programme was launched in January 2008. The Western Education and Library Board adopted an approach which involved working with all schools within the Derry City Council area and with a range of other partners and stakeholders

10 The Department for Employment and Learning Further Education Leavers Survey 2010-11

learner's best interests, rather than the organisation's needs.

16. The education and training system is privileged to have many good leaders and managers. The quality of the leadership and management in the primary schools inspected during the period of this report has improved since the previous report by 10 percentage points. In work-based learning, the quality of the leadership and management has improved by seven percentage points. However, leadership and management remains an area for improvement across most phases. It is still not good enough in 22% of primary schools and 33% of work-based learning providers inspected; it requires improvement in 20% of the Steps to Work lead contractors, 30% of pre-school settings and in 39% of post-primary schools inspected in this reporting period.
17. There has not been sufficient improvement in the overall quality of middle-management across all phases since the previous reporting period. While improvement has been made in the primary and further education sectors, it remains

the case that in around one-third of all organisations inspected, middle-management requires improvement.

18. A key challenge for all leaders is to improve transitional arrangements between organisations in order to overcome the regression that can occur at these points. It is therefore imperative that all organisations are able to correlate each learner's achievements with their potential and that, where necessary, interventions are applied swiftly and appropriately to combat both low achievement and underachievement.
19. In his statement, *Putting pupils first: shaping our future*<sup>11</sup>, the Minister for Education highlighted the need to move forward with strategic planning of the schools' estate on an area basis. The aim is to build a network of sustainable schools that would enhance the quality of provision and raise standards. This essential work is in progress and needs to continue at a swifter pace in order to ensure that all learners have equitable access to a high-quality education.

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11 Putting pupils first: shaping our future statement; Education Minister 26 September 2011

### **Achieving value: boards of governors**

20. Effective school governors support and challenge the work of the organisation. It is imperative that all boards of governors are tenacious in their focus on important school improvement issues, such as setting higher standards and expectations, and understanding better the quality of the learning taking place. During the reporting period, the quality of the strategic leadership of the governors in schools was evaluated as good or better in 80% of primary and 66% of post-primary schools. Of note is the improved quality of governance in the Irish Medium (IM) sector. In voluntary and private pre-school settings, the annual changeover of the management group may hinder the development of high quality provision.
21. It is clear that there is a need to build on the work of the good boards of governors that already exist. In his statement, *Putting pupils first: shaping our future* the Minister for Education asked the ETI to strengthen the inspection process to enable the effectiveness of boards of governors to be assessed so that governors can

have feedback on how they are doing and so that good practice can be identified and shared. Revised inspection arrangements will be trialled with a selection of schools in the autumn in preparation for full implementation

### **Achieving value: self-evaluation and improvement**

22. Self-evaluation leading to sustained improvement is a key cornerstone of high quality provision that enables learners to fulfil their potential. It works best where it is robust and rigorous; it involves leadership at all levels; is embedded in teachers' or tutors' work; and, is continuous, moving and evolving. Inclusive and critical self-evaluation with good use of data has been key to improvements in the primary sector and is a factor in the best performing post-primary schools and further education colleges. Although in the youth sector and in the DCAL provision self-evaluation for improvement is being more widely used, it still needs to be further embedded.
23. Many schools and providers are performing well and have a strong focus on improvement. Underpinning the expectation for

all schools to achieve good public value and fulfil the potential of all learners, the DE launched the Every School A Good School policy in 2009<sup>12</sup>. A key element of this policy is ensuring that all young people achieve their potential and, where this does not happen, appropriate intervention occurs through the Formal Intervention Process (FIP). Twenty-one primary and 13 post-primary schools have entered the FIP since the introduction of this policy.

24. A common factor in those post-primary schools which have been placed in the FIP is the low number of learners achieving five good GCSEs including English and mathematics. Despite external support, these schools struggle to effect significant improvements for the next cohort of pupils studying for GCSE. Employing authorities and governors need to make more robust use of the data available to them to identify and address downward trends in examination outcomes before underachievement becomes endemic in the school.
25. Of the 13 post-primary schools that have entered the FIP since its introduction, one school has exited and another closed before exiting the process. The majority of the schools currently in the FIP are in the controlled sector. Common to all schools which have entered the FIP are: low attainment in public examinations, the quality of learning and teaching and aspects of leadership. There are many reasons for the slow progress made by these schools, including the additional challenges that can often be found in larger organisations. In particularly acute cases, the schools need to work hard to regain the confidence of their communities.
26. Inspection evidence indicates that the FIP has been impacting more positively in the primary than in the post-primary phase; 13 out of 21 primary schools have exited the programme successfully<sup>13</sup>. Of these 13 schools, eight were in the IM sector. These schools were part of a growing, embryonic sector and, with hindsight, may have benefited from the stronger, more focused support being put in place during the early stages of their

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<sup>12</sup> Under the Every School A Good School policy, each school evaluated as less than satisfactory by ETI is placed by DE into FIP for the purpose of it receiving intensive support to assist it to improve

<sup>13</sup> Of the 21 primary schools that have entered FIP, 13 schools have exited and one school closed while in the process.



development. The schools focused on the areas for improvement identified at inspection and are now providing a better education for their pupils.

27. Key to exiting the FIP in the primary sector was the success of the schools in bringing about improvements in one or more of the following: the standards attained in literacy and numeracy; the incidence of underachievement; the quality of learning and teaching; and the quality of leadership and management. The schools focused on the core business of providing high-quality learning and teaching, which enabled the children to achieve at their full potential.
28. Among the key drivers for the continuous improvement of the quality of provision across the further education and work-based learning sectors, including the Steps to Work programme, are a relevant and work-related curriculum, characterised by high expectations of the learners and participants, and complemented by good support and encouragement. These are underpinned by well-embedded self-evaluation processes and the effective use of data. Inspection evidence indicates that learners and participants perform well and achieve good standards of work when their learning programmes meet effectively their individual education and training needs and employment aspirations.
29. The specialist schools programme, which included 44 schools, concluded in 2011-12 and had significant benefits for most of the participating schools. In the best practice, senior leadership teams became more adept at monitoring and evaluating the quality of the provision and teachers became more focused on the pupils' learning and their standards. A key benefit of the programme was in accelerating positive changes, which might otherwise have taken longer. The most effective specialist schools have the capacity and enthusiasm to disseminate improvement to other schools. The DE needs to consider further how to share more widely the benefits of the specialist schools programme.
30. Looking ahead, there are many uncertainties and challenges for the Northern Ireland education system. Major issues remain to be resolved,

### **Achieving value: going forward**

such as the implementation of a fully-functioning Education and Skills Authority (ESA) and the more effective collaboration of individual organisations so that they work together in the best interests of the learner. The transfer process for children moving to post-primary education remains unsettling for the children, their parents and schools; it is a matter of concern that this has been the case for some considerable time.

31. The range of full-time and part-time provision offered across the further education sector is wide and diverse. This includes significant provision for the essential skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), along with a key role in the provision of the ApprenticeshipsNI programme. The colleges and work-based learning providers have a vital role to play in supporting

the economic strategy for Northern Ireland: to improve the skills and employability of the workforce, to support economic growth and to deliver higher productivity and increased social inclusion.

32. Although the current economic climate continues to have a detrimental effect on the recruitment of apprentices to important economic areas, the ApprenticeshipsNI programme continues to support the key overarching Government strategies, including *Success through Skills*<sup>14</sup>, important strands of which are to improve the skills, employability and productivity of the workforce. The economic downturn has brought significant challenges such as rising numbers of participants on the Steps to Work programme and a decline in the number of jobs available.

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14 Success through Skills-Transforming Futures; Skills strategy for Northern Ireland 2011



# Learning Skills

**To what extent are learners acquiring and developing the skills needed to develop as individuals and contributors to society and the economy?**

33. The Northern Ireland Curriculum (NIC)<sup>15</sup> and the range of provision in further education and work-based learning as well as the informal curriculum in youth and DCAL empower young people with the skills needed for life and work, as well as the dispositions, capabilities and learning behaviours to help them become life-long learners. In order to ensure that all learners continue to acquire and develop these skills, inspection evidence has identified the following key challenges:

- ♦ **ensuring that the curricular offer meets the needs of all learners;**
- ♦ **continuing to develop learners' literacy and numeracy skills;**
- ♦ **building on the good learning and teaching observed;**
- ♦ **improving the use of ICT to enhance learning and teaching in post-primary schools and work-based learning;**
- ♦ **raising the aspirations and motivation of every learner through effective pastoral care so that they fulfil their potential;**
- ♦ **improving the offer and uptake of modern languages in post-primary, particularly non-selective schools; and**
- ♦ **improving further the quality of careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) for full-time students in further education and in around 32% of post-primary schools inspected.**

<sup>15</sup> NIC is aligned closely to the European framework for competences for lifelong learning (European Commission, 2006)

### **Acquiring and developing skills: the curriculum**

34. The majority of schools are on track to meet the 2015 Entitlement Framework requirements. This applies both at KS4 and post-16.
35. At KS4, there is variance in the quality of provision in the statutory area of study, learning for life and work (LLW). Just over one-half of the schools whose LLW provision was evaluated required improvement, particularly where the learners were given insufficient opportunities to develop their skills. An effective learning programme weaves the strands of personal development, employability and local and global citizenship into a meaningful and coherent experience.
36. The acquisition and development of thinking skills is central to good achievement and becoming a resilient and adaptable learner. Inspection evidence indicates that in primary schools and at KS3, there is an improving trend in the quality of children's thinking skills and capabilities. However, at KS4, teachers are focused more often on the prescribed examination content at the expense of the learners being enabled to use and develop their skills further.
37. In addition to teaching the knowledge, skills and understanding of a range of subjects, all organisations need to educate learners in cultural understanding, creativity and entrepreneurship. The benefits of acquiring these skills for the learner are greater personal fulfilment, increased chances of employment and better engagement with the local and global communities to which they belong.
38. Young people in education other than at school (EOTAS) do not have access to a sufficiently wide curriculum due to underdeveloped links between providers in the area learning communities (ALCs). Further education colleges offer a wide range of part-time and full-time courses to support the economic strategy and enable learners to develop a broad range of industry-relevant practical knowledge and skills. The DCAL offer a range of activities that engage learners and complements the work of the formal sector.

### **Acquiring and developing skills: literacy and numeracy**

39. Inspection evidence reveals that the continued development of learners' literacy and numeracy skills remains a priority for all sectors. Literacy continues to be the key to accessing all learning; it is, therefore, imperative that all aspects of the formal and informal curriculum contribute to the development of literacy.
40. As indicated previously, the need to improve the mathematics skills of our learners is a priority. In order to have the ability to solve a range of problems in everyday situations, key numeracy skills and financial capability are essential. In the most effective practice, learners are developing their mathematical skills and their ability to apply these to a variety of contexts; this requires a focus on the development of the learners' core knowledge and understanding as a necessary precursor for skills development. When teachers and tutors have high expectations and learners participate actively in their learning, they are more engaged and respond positively.
41. In pre-school settings and the early years of the primary phase, there are too few opportunities for children to acquire and use the correct language necessary for the understanding of early mathematical concepts. In too many organisations<sup>16</sup>, insufficient account is taken of the learners' prior knowledge and understanding to enable teachers or tutors to address their mathematical needs appropriately and ensure progression.
42. While the outcomes for children at the end of KS2 are improving, almost one child in five still leaves the primary school not having achieved the expected level in English and mathematics. Moreover, the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2009 scores for mathematical literacy indicated that the ability of Northern Ireland's 15 year olds to apply their mathematics needs to improve<sup>17</sup>; it

<sup>16</sup> See Better Mathematics (ETI, 2006), Transition in Mathematics: Primary to Post-primary (ETI, 2010), Better Numeracy (ETI, 2010) and Follow-up to Better Mathematics (ETI, 2010)

<sup>17</sup> The PISA is an international study that assesses 15 year olds' competencies in reading, mathematics and science. In 2000, two OECD countries had average scores significantly higher than Northern Ireland in mathematics. By 2009, the most recent report available at the time of writing, 13 OECD countries had average scores significantly higher than Northern Ireland



also revealed that there had been negligible improvement in reading literacy scores since the previous assessment in 2006.

43. Literacy and numeracy co-ordinators play a crucial role in raising standards through building capacity by promoting an understanding of more effective approaches and strategies. In the primary, post-primary and teacher education phases, there is not a clear enough understanding of how the cross-curricular nature of literacy and numeracy can enhance the quality of learning in both English, mathematics and other curriculum areas. Teachers of all subjects need to provide regular opportunities for learners to develop their literacy and numeracy skills in a wider range of contexts
44. Some post-primary schools opt to offer their pupils essential skills qualifications instead of GCSE English and mathematics. It is crucial that essential skills qualifications are only offered where the school has evidence that it would not be appropriate for an individual pupil to follow a GCSE course. Where this is the case, schools need to ensure that the teachers who are preparing their

pupils for essential skills are trained appropriately. Proficiency in English and mathematics is crucial as it enables the learner better access to the curriculum, while appropriate accreditation creates opportunities for progression to the next stage of education, training or employment.

45. In work-based learning, the achievement of an essential skills qualification at level 2 enhances significantly the employment opportunities for those learners who choose to follow professional and technical programmes. There has been a significant improvement in the overall quality of the provision for the essential skills of literacy and numeracy; it is good or better in approximately 76% of the organisations inspected, compared to 60% in the previous reporting period. However, in the remaining organisations, more work is needed to improve the quality of provision, including better integration of the essential skills into the learners' main professional and technical programmes.
46. Similarly, in the further education sector, important weaknesses were identified in the leadership and management of the essential skills provision in two colleges. Follow-up

inspection activity in one of these colleges identified significant improvements in the quality of the provision, including very importantly, an increased strategic priority within the curriculum for the essential skills programme across the college.

teaching; 50% of lessons in primary and 60% of lessons in post-primary schools are still not consistently very good or better. In a minority of instances, teaching was judged to have significant shortcomings and required immediate improvement.

### **Acquiring and developing skills: learning and teaching**

47. The importance of high quality teaching and the impact it has on learning and on achievement and standards cannot be underestimated. Inspection evidence shows that many children and young people benefit significantly from high quality teaching which is characterised by: high teacher expectations with a clear focus on learning outcomes and which build on prior knowledge and understanding; well-structured lessons that challenge and support all learners; and, effective questioning and a plenary which serves to consolidate learning.
48. Inspection evidence shows that the majority of children and young people benefit from teaching which is good or better. There is a need to increase the proportion of very good and outstanding learning and

### **Acquiring and developing skills: information and communication technology**

49. In a rapidly-changing technological world, learners require the skills to be creative and critical in order to interact appropriately with an ever-widening range of ICT tools. Inspection evidence indicates that the use of digital learning needs to be developed further. Given that approximately £470 million has been invested in the C2k managed service from 2000-2011, it is of concern that in around 50% of all post-primary schools inspected, the use of ICT to support learning and teaching was evaluated as less than good. In the majority of schools inspected, learning platforms remain under-utilised by teachers and pupils. Inspection evidence indicates that the leadership and management of ICT are stronger in primary than in post-primary schools. It is a matter of concern

that the quality of the ICT provision is in need of improvement given that statutory assessment of the cross-curricular skill of Using ICT will be introduced in 2013-14.

50. In the further education sector, four colleges participated in a DEL-funded pilot of technology enhanced learning and, as a result, have made good progress in providing flexible on-line learning solutions for learners, and also in facilitating widening access to further education courses. In addition, in the best teaching sessions observed, 44% of lessons, a key feature was the innovative use of information and learning technology (ILT)<sup>18</sup> to extend and enrich the students' learning experiences. In the work-based learning sector, ILT to enhance learning is under-utilised in almost all organisations inspected; its innovative use was observed in only a very few organisations.
51. The digital and creative industries have the potential to promote economic growth. The DCAL recognises the need to promote these industries which are linked

to future employment trends. It is timely also, that the DEL is now addressing the creative industries as one of their skills priorities.

### **Acquiring and developing skills: personal development and staying safe**

52. There is a clear correlation between good achievement and high-quality pastoral care. The quality of the pastoral care provided by the education and training organisations inspected was a significant strength. Pastoral care plays a crucial role in supporting and enabling learners to develop their skills and capabilities and to learn effectively. An appropriate balance needs to be achieved between providing support when learners face personal difficulties and equipping them with coping strategies, self-management skills and positive dispositions towards learning. Raising learners' aspirations, motivation and drive, to ensure they fulfil their potential, is an essential element of pastoral care.

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<sup>18</sup> ICT is the term used in schools for digital learning. A more common term for digital learning in further education and work-based learning is ILT

53. Effectively-focused and well-taught personal development programmes make an important contribution to the positive mental well-being of learners. Such practice is a central feature of those organisations which provide very good or outstanding care, guidance and support. They recognise the importance of strong inter-disciplinary approaches: they make good links with relevant statutory and voluntary agencies and utilise their expertise and resources effectively to provide additional support to learners. Research indicates that effective programmes can have a demonstrable impact on improving pupils' emotional health and well-being and can lead to notable increases in individual educational achievement<sup>19</sup>.
54. The outcomes of an evaluation of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) in 2010<sup>20</sup> indicated that post-primary schools have made good progress in this area since the Health Education survey of 2002.
55. Key to young people's welfare is the need to feel safe. In almost 75% of the organisations inspected, the safeguarding arrangements were evaluated as comprehensive, confirming that highly effective policies and practices are in place for safeguarding. In just over 20% of the evaluations made during inspection, the safeguarding arrangements were judged to be satisfactory with minor issues usually arising from situations largely outside the organisations' control.
56. During the inspections, a few organisations were evaluated as having unsatisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults. They did not have in place procedures which implemented sufficiently the guidance outlined in the relevant Department's circulars. Among the areas which the organisations needed to address were the vetting of all of the staff and the review and updating of training in safeguarding for staff and governors. They did not have sufficient governors trained in safeguarding to sit on recruitment or selection panels. In addition, they needed to consult

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19 Payton et al., 2008; Durlak et al., 2011; Connolly et al., 2011. Queen's University research indicates that strong leadership, a whole-school approach and a whole-person approach to the overall promotion of pupils' emotional health and well-being are essential

20 Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Survey May 2010 [www.etini.gov.uk](http://www.etini.gov.uk)

with the learners in reviewing the organisation's safeguarding policies and practices.

57. The few organisations with unsatisfactory safeguarding arrangements needed to work towards greater consistency in the implementation of an agreed code of conduct for staff, ratified by the board of governors or management committee. They did not have in place effective and secure recording systems in the event of a concern being raised. They also needed to ensure that the arrangements for safeguarding were made known directly to the parents/guardians at least every two years.

### **Acquiring and developing skills: learning other languages**

58. Non-statutory measures have been successful in encouraging the growth of modern languages in the primary schools. Around one-half of all primary schools have opted into the Primary Languages Programme with just less than thirty thousand children studying a language in the foundation stage (FS) and KS1. Many schools have

also begun to expand provision into KS2.

59. In contrast, in post-primary schools, particularly non-selective schools, the number of pupils studying a language beyond KS3 is declining and fewer pupils than before are continuing with the study of a modern language<sup>21</sup>. It is crucial that school leaders encourage strongly the uptake of modern languages and improve the provision, quality and relevance of language teaching. Where necessary, ALCs need to consider a fuller provision for modern languages across a number of schools and colleges in their locality. Failing to encourage our young people, and not providing them with opportunities, to develop language skills in addition to English is reducing their employability prospects in a global economy.

### **Acquiring and developing skills: careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG)**

60. There has been a significant improvement in the quality of CEIAG in post-primary schools during this reporting period, rising from over one-third to just

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21 A Short Report on the Provision for Modern Languages in a Sample of Non-Selective Schools (ETI, 2011)



over two-thirds of schools in which it was evaluated as good or better. This improvement was also observed in special schools. Where the provision for CEIAG was evaluated as good or better, leaders understood well the fundamental role of CEIAG in supporting the learner to improve their

understanding of local and global labour employment trends and the skills sets that are in demand. However, in further education, too many full time students are not sufficiently well informed about the career pathways available to them on completion of their courses.



# Transforming Communities

**To what extent are education and training organisations transforming communities?**

61. The formal and informal education and training sectors can transform lives by challenging the poverty of aspiration and encouraging learners, with the support of parents and carers, to achieve to their full potential. In order to transform the lives of our children, young people and adult learners, and the communities to which they belong, inspection evidence has identified the following key challenges:
- ◇ **closing the achievement gap and breaking the link between social disadvantage and poor educational performance;**
  - ◇ **improving further the quality of partnerships which benefit the learners, as highlighted by inspection evidence and research;**
  - ◇ **encouraging all parents and carers to recognise their role in, and the importance of, their child's education;**
  - ◇ **sustaining a strong focus on the critical contribution of education to economic growth and reducing poverty;**
  - ◇ **encouraging learners to have a greater say in their education and training; inspection evidence and research on pupil participation demonstrate the benefits for young people when they are consulted about matters that affect them; and**
  - ◇ **accruing the benefits of the International Fund for Ireland's Sharing in Education Programme so that young people respect each other, learn together and reach the highest standards of educational achievement.**

### **Transforming communities: closing the achievement gap**

62. Closing the gap in educational achievement, particularly between advantaged and disadvantaged learners is a priority. The PISA results (2009) suggest that the link between individual achievement and socio-economic background is stronger here than in other Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries. Nevertheless, there is also evidence, both locally and internationally, that this link can be broken. Setting high expectations for achievement and raising aspirations for all learners, regardless of their background, is a key factor in raising educational standards and improving life chances.
63. Where schools and providers have broken successfully the link between disadvantage and educational performance, a key characteristic was the setting of challenging targets for learner success. These targets were achievable, but reflected absolutely the high expectations of learners and their teachers and tutors. Such targets were informed by a range of performance data and were

benchmarked against providers with similar characteristics; for example, in schools the targets were benchmarked against free school meal indicators. Inspection evidence indicates that in the best practice, using accurate data informs effective self-evaluation leading to educational improvement for all learners across our communities.

64. Some schools are failing to break a cycle of underachievement that has persisted over a period of time. All schools need to work as a united community to share and develop good practices across the controlled, integrated and maintained sectors, as well as further education, work-based learning and the informal sectors, to improve standards and educational outcomes for all learners. To bring about greater sharing in education and training, organisations need to create inclusive environments where their learners can participate fully and have opportunities to learn alongside others.

### **Transforming communities: promoting partnership working**

65. All learners belong to communities that are characterised by familial

expectations, social influences and cultural traditions. Learners benefit in situations where there are strong links and partnerships. The Effective Pre-school Provision in Northern Ireland (EPPNI)<sup>22</sup> research project highlights the importance of the partnership between children, parents, the community and educational organisations in supporting learning. This study demonstrates the positive effects of high quality pre-school provision on children's intellectual, social and behavioural development up to the end of KS2.

66. The quality of provision across the different types of pre-school settings has been variable in recent years. While this gap is narrowing, there remains the need to reduce the gap further, so that all children can access consistently high-quality educational experiences, regardless of the type of pre-school setting they attend. Children have benefited well from programmes which encourage the involvement of parents and carers in their education.

67. Every School a Good School highlights the importance of schools working in partnership with their local communities. The issue of collaboration and maintaining partnerships in order to benefit the learner remains a significant and ongoing challenge for all educational providers, not only schools. For example, in further education, there is a need to develop additional partnerships across the sector in the key areas of curriculum development and the sharing of resources to meet more effectively the needs of learners and of industry.

68. The development of ALCs dovetails with the Entitlement Framework requirements which will ensure all post-14 learners have access to a wide range of general and applied courses<sup>23</sup>. Where learners have had their educational pathways limited, this can lead to a negative impact on their educational attainment and emotional health and well-being<sup>24</sup>. In addition, there are significant financial and other costs to the community.

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22 The original EPPNI project investigated the effects of pre-school education and care on children's development for children aged 3-8 years old. A follow-up study considered the effects of a range of variables, including pre-school experience, on children's educational attainment in English and mathematics at the end of KS2

23 By 2015, all young people should have access to 24 courses at KS4 and 27 at post-16

24 Pupils' Emotional Health and Wellbeing: Connolly et al (QUB, 2011) indicates that between 10-20% of pupils in post-primary schools experience emotional health and well-being related problems

69. There are many benefits to be gained from organisations working in harmony through strong local partnerships to the learner's advantage. For example, transformative educational communities include the effective collaboration between special schools, mainstream schools and youth providers. The Review of Special Educational Needs and Inclusion<sup>25</sup> has recognised the importance of the continuum of provision to meet the diversity of need across special and mainstream sectors. While special schools are developing a support role to mainstream schools and learners with special educational needs, this support role has not developed consistently across the Education and Library Boards (ELBs) and requires a greater commonality of approach. More cohesive planning and closer collaboration are now required to serve the best interests of the learners through creating more diverse and inclusive educational communities.

### **Transforming communities: recognising the importance of education and training**

70. In both primary and post-primary schools, overall absence levels tend to increase in line with the percentage of pupils who are eligible for free school meals. Since free school meal eligibility is an indicator of levels of deprivation, the evidence shows that absence tends to be higher in more disadvantaged areas.
71. In 2010-11, in schools with low free school meals entitlement (less than 10%) the absence level was 3.8% of total half days in primary and 4.6% in post-primary<sup>26</sup>. For those schools with more than 50% free school meal entitlement, it was more than double; 7.8% of the total half days for primary and 11.7% for post-primary. In some post-primary schools in the most disadvantaged areas, it is as high as 17%. In both primary and post-primary schools, absence was higher for those living in Neighbourhood Renewal Areas than those not. Children must attend school to learn and reach their full potential. It is

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<sup>25</sup> Review of Special Education Needs and Inclusion (2012)

<sup>26</sup> Attendance at grant maintained, primary, post primary and special schools 2010/11 (March 2012)



important that all schools prioritise engagement with parents and their local communities to optimise school attendance and the value placed on education.

72. The Extended Schools programme can make a positive difference where it is well led, has whole-school involvement and a clear focus on improving attendance and achievements and standards. An ETI survey of the Extended Schools programme in 2010, found improvements in the educational outcomes and the personal and social well-being of pupils in the most effective practice. In such instances, these schools helped parents re-engage with education following their own, often poor, experiences and perceptions of school.

### **Transforming communities: education and training's contribution to economic growth**

73. Education and training is critical to building a prosperous local economy, enabling us to compete globally and to providing young people with the range of skills and

qualifications necessary to compete in the jobs market. The promotion of STEM subjects is important to our future economic growth. If the economy grows as predicted by supporting and growing indigenous STEM businesses and attracting inward investment in these sectors, then demand for learners with skills in the STEM subjects will increase. This is supported by the Forecasting of Future Skill Needs in NI<sup>27</sup> and is a key theme of the skills strategy, Success through Skills<sup>28</sup>.

74. Science and technology is one of the compulsory areas of learning at KS3 and a qualification choice at KS4. The NIC provides much greater freedom for teachers to explore STEM-related learning with pupils in interesting and innovative ways. The links between science and technology, in terms of connected learning, extended projects and themed approaches are increasing, particularly at KS3.

75. As we move to full implementation of the Entitlement Framework in September 2015, pupils at KS4 and post-16 are accessing a broader, balanced curriculum.

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<sup>27</sup> This report forecast the demand for skills in the short, medium and longer term (DEL, 2009)

<sup>28</sup> Success through Skills – Transforming Futures (DEL, 2011)

Where this is supported by good CEIAG, pupils are well placed to make good choices to achieve their next steps in learning or a career. Raising achievement in mathematics, particularly for those from disadvantaged backgrounds, is a priority to enable young people to access the STEM subjects at a higher level and to access employment in the related industries.

76. Success through Skills identifies the need to raise levels of social inclusion through better skills development that provides a route to stable employment, personal development and fulfilment for the learner, and long-term prosperity for the economy. The work-based learning providers and further education colleges provide good opportunities for learners to develop their skills and for others to re-engage in education and training, enhancing their employment prospects. While there is evidence of good and increasing economic engagement in further education colleges, more needs to be done to expand the sometimes narrow work-based learning curriculum and to expand the scope

and take-up of apprenticeships in parts of Northern Ireland.

### **Transforming communities: encouraging learner participation**

77. Recent inspection evidence indicates that learners are increasingly encouraged to have a say in matters that affect them through effective school and college councils and youth forums. The most effective practice involves active consultation with young people, engaging them in democratic processes in which they can bring about positive change to their school, college, youth setting and local community. Research indicates that outcomes for children and young people in their learning and in their lives often improve when they are involved actively in decision-making<sup>29</sup>.
78. Increasingly, many organisations promote actively children's and young people's rights. These organisations develop an ethos of diversity and inclusion through encouraging their learners' involvement in education about human rights. The organisations which live out human rights values

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29 Evaluation of UNICEF UK's Rights Respecting Schools Award, Sussex University, September 2010

offer their learners opportunities to acquire the skills, values and dispositions which are essential for life in a shared society. These skills include learning about mutual respect and understanding, managing and resolving conflict and promoting good relations.

**Transforming communities:  
respecting others and accruing  
the benefits of the Sharing in  
Education Programme**

79. The flexibility required to meet the needs of all of the young people within an area may be at variance with historical and localised views and expectations. We still live in a largely divided society, unsettled by sectarianism, racism and community mistrust. This division has contributed to the duplication of resources and a failure to provide opportunities for all learners to benefit from the rich learning experiences gained from engaging with those who are different in ability, culture or background.
80. The DE's Community Relations, Equality and Diversity in Education (CRED)<sup>30</sup> policy seeks to educate

children and young people to live and participate in a changing Northern Ireland where they possess the skills, attitudes and behaviours to respect difference and engage positively with it. In the formal curriculum, this important learning is embedded in personal development and mutual understanding (PDMU) in the primary schools and at post-primary level it is central to LLW.

81. The International Fund for Ireland's Sharing in Education programme, managed by the DE, provides opportunities for children and young people from different communities to share learning experiences, develop better mutual understanding and promote reconciliation. The wide range of projects has the potential to leave a legacy of discernible benefits for the young people involved and for their communities. The ETI's emergent findings<sup>31</sup> of the programme highlight as strengths: the positive engagement of the children, young people, teachers and facilitators, and their enthusiasm and readiness to learn and work together. It is timely that all education and youth

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30 Community Relations, Equality and Diversity in Education DE March 2011

31 First Interim Evaluation on the International Fund for Ireland's Sharing in Education Programme (ETI, June 2012)

organisations give appropriate priority to community relations work, to ensure that their learners benefit similarly from the good relations that have emerged from this programme to date.

82. Inspection evidence indicates clearly that learners, once engaged in good quality work-based learning, professional and technical programmes, characterised by good workplace experiences, display positive changes in their self-confidence, along with constructive attitudes towards education and further training.

83. The challenge for the education, work-based learning and youth sectors is to persevere with this important work to ensure that all of our learners are equipped well to understand and contribute to the building of a more shared and inclusive society. In so doing, the more effective educational and training organisations will transform positively the lives of their learners and develop the learners' capacity to transform the local and global communities to which they belong.
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## Pre-school settings

The overall effectiveness of 76% of the pre-school settings inspected was evaluated as good or better...



# Going Well

The strengths include:

- ◇ most children experience a good or better pre-school education;
- ◇ the overall effectiveness of the voluntary and private sector continues to improve;
- ◇ achievements and standards are good or better in 80% of the pre-school settings inspected;
- ◇ in the good to outstanding settings, staff communicate well with a range of other organisations to support the learning and care of the children and to disseminate better practice; and
- ◇ in the best practice, settings involve parents well in their children's learning and development.

# Going Forward

There is a need to:

- ◇ further develop the continuity and progression of children's learning across all stages;
- ◇ continue to develop staff skills to provide a high quality pre-school programme; and
- ◇ improve the quality of leadership and management in 30% of the settings inspected.

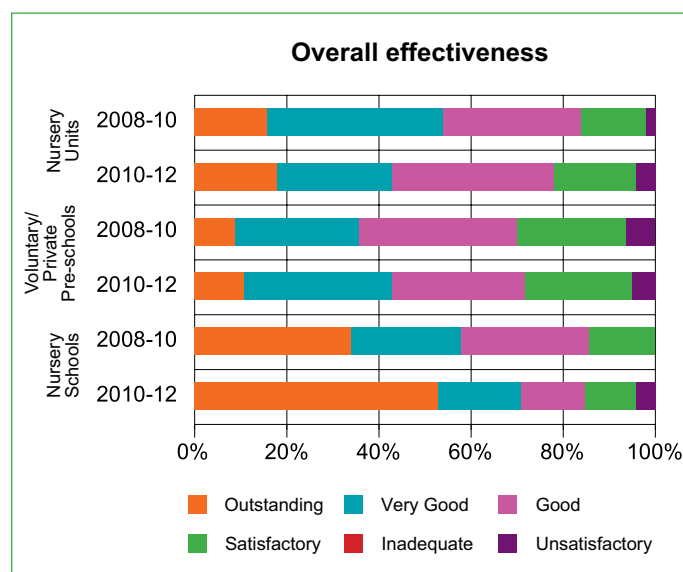
## The quality of the provision in pre-school settings

Inspection Evidence	
Nursery schools	28
Nursery units	50
Total for statutory sector <sup>32</sup>	78
Voluntary and private sector <sup>33</sup>	133
Follow-up inspections	22
Interim follow-up visits	44

### Overall effectiveness

84. During the reporting period, the overall effectiveness of approximately three-quarters (76%) of the pre-school settings inspected was evaluated as good or better. A small number of settings were evaluated as inadequate.
85. The percentage of voluntary and private settings evaluated as good or better has increased from 70% to 73% since the last reporting period. While a slightly higher percentage of good or better provision still exists within the

statutory sector, there has been a slight drop from 85% to 81% when compared to the previous reporting period.



### Achievements and standards

86. Overall, achievements and standards are good or better in 80% of the pre-school settings inspected. In nursery schools, achievements and standards were evaluated as good or better in 88% of settings, a reduction from 94% in the last reporting period while, in voluntary and private pre-school settings, they improved by five percentage points to 78%.
87. In the best practice observed, the children are settled and confident

<sup>32</sup> Statutory includes nursery schools and nursery classes or units within a primary school

<sup>33</sup> Voluntary/private includes funded provision within playgroups and day nurseries



in exploring new experiences and activities across all areas of the pre-school curriculum. They become more independent and express and develop their own ideas. The children display appropriate levels of involvement in their play, share resources and materials with others and they are able to persevere in order to complete their chosen activity.

vocabulary and their listening and thinking skills; it also develops their sense of enquiry about the world around them. The staff encourage the children to settle well into the pre-school setting and promote good behaviour, including positive attitudes to learning, resilience and independence.

### The quality of the provision for learning

88. Most children attending pre-school settings, regardless of the sector, experience a good or better pre-school education which is crucial to their future education and well-being. In the most effective provision, the activities are appropriately challenging and matched well to the time of year and the children's age and stage of development.
89. Across the different types of settings, there is broad consistency in the quality of learning and teaching, with around 80% of the sessions evaluated as good or better. In the most effective practice, the high standard of interaction by adults promotes the development of the children's
90. In the good to outstanding settings, the staff communicate with a range of other organisations and professionals including day nurseries, Sure Start, after-school care centres, social services and speech and language therapists, to ensure there is a more joined-up approach to supporting children and their families. In the best practice, these settings have also begun to work more collaboratively with other pre-school providers to share their knowledge and skills of the pre-school curriculum and support the children's progress and achievements.
91. More attention needs to be given to those children who make transitions mid-term, especially those children transferring into a pre-school class as they reach the appropriate age. The DE census records, which are completed annually by schools in October, indicate that

the number of children under compulsory school age and enrolled in reception classes continues to decline. These figures, however, do not include the increasing numbers of children enrolled by primary schools between the beginning of November and the end of June. The quality of provision for these children remains variable especially when they are enrolled in a composite class with children from at least one other year group.

92. Many of the more effective settings encourage parents to play an active part in their child's education. In the best practice, the settings facilitate parental workshops related to the curriculum and promote courses to help parents to support their child's learning at home. Increasingly, parents' views are sought about aspects of the provision and acted upon by the setting, when appropriate.
93. The quality of planning to meet the children's differing needs and the assessment of their progress remain the most frequently identified areas for improvement across all sectors. In just over 33% of the settings inspected, the staff do not make full use of their observations of, and interactions

with, the children to plan and provide learning experiences which promote steady progress in each child's overall development and learning.

## Leadership and management

94. The quality of leadership and management is good or better in 70% of the pre-school settings inspected and in 25% it is satisfactory. There is a strong correlation between leadership and management which is good or better and the quality of provision, standards and the overall effectiveness of the pre-school setting.
95. Within the statutory sector, 86% of nursery schools were evaluated as having good to outstanding leadership and management compared to 74% of nursery units. These figures correlate closely with overall effectiveness within these settings, where 88% of the nursery schools and 78% of the nursery units inspected were evaluated as good to outstanding. The difference in quality within the statutory sector is also evident in the children's achievements and standards and in variations in learning and teaching. In the

most effective practice, the nursery unit is an integral part of the life and work of the primary school, the development of the nursery unit is a priority within the school development plan and the nursery teacher has the appropriate skills to deliver a high-quality pre-school programme.

96. In the voluntary and private pre-school settings, the quality of leadership and management that was evaluated as good or better has declined since the previous reporting period from 71% to 66%. A range of factors continue to impact on the leadership and management of these pre-school settings including: the employment in leadership roles of inexperienced staff without the sound knowledge and understanding of how young children learn, or the skills to plan and implement a high-quality pre-school programme; the annual change in the membership of the management group; and a more frequent turnover of staff than in other settings.
97. The IM sector continues to grow with the opening of new voluntary settings and nursery units. There remains, however, variation in the overall effectiveness of these

settings with 64% evaluated as good or very good, 18% satisfactory, and 18% inadequate. In half of the IM settings inspected, the quality of the leadership and management was evaluated as good or better, but in 16% it was evaluated as inadequate or unsatisfactory. Some of the key issues include the low level of Irish language proficiency among some staff members and the insufficient awareness of some leaders about how to deliver a quality pre-school curriculum.

98. Across the pre-school sector as a whole, the most effective leaders are proactive in accessing continuing professional development and training for staff through a range of methods, including collaborating with other practitioners and professionals. The majority of leaders, in both the statutory and voluntary sectors, need to increase the opportunities for ongoing professional development for all staff.

## Achieving value

99. Although there is evidence of improving pastoral links between many pre-school settings and primary schools in managing the transition, there remains a variation in the practice and effectiveness regarding the sharing of information on the children's progress and achievements. This is vital to help ensure continuity and progression in the children's learning experiences and to raise standards further.
100. In line with the DE's emphasis on improving educational outcomes for

all children, as part of their funding agreement, voluntary and private pre-school settings are required to avail of support and advice from a qualified teacher or a suitably qualified early years specialist. The quality of the external support provided by the early years specialists to voluntary and private settings remains varied. In 16% of the settings inspected, the support was evaluated as satisfactory; in just under 8% of the settings, it was evaluated as inadequate. A more detailed evaluation of this work is required so that the contribution of the range of early years specialists to the quality of voluntary and private provision is better understood.

## Learning Skills

101. The skills of staff, their understanding of the learning potential of play activities and their ability to introduce ideas which enrich the children's play and promote learning, are key to the development of the children's skills. In settings where the adults do not have the required skills to develop fully the programme to meet the wide range of the children's stages of development, there is a clear impact on the standards the children achieve.
102. In around 20% of the sessions observed, the standard of interaction between adults and children was not of sufficient quality to support the development of the children's skills and dispositions required for life-long learning. To enable effective progression and continuity in learning, the interactions between the staff and children need to be of a consistently high quality, with a particular focus on the development of the children's language skills and early mathematical understanding.

## Transforming communities

103. Parents and carers are a child's first educator and have an important role to play in their development during the pre-school years. It is important that all pre-school settings listen to, and have a good understanding of, the needs of their parents and the local community.
- In the best practice, the settings promote greater involvement through, for example, supporting and consulting with parents to help them encourage their child to achieve his or her full potential. Potential barriers to learning can also be reduced by the setting's development of active partnerships with local community groups and external agencies.

# Case study

## Developing children's mathematical language in a pre-school setting



**The issue:** Using the pre-school curricular guidance document as a starting point for discussion, the staff audited their mathematics provision. They identified that while the staff and children referred frequently to the language of number and shape, they missed opportunities to develop a broader range of mathematical ideas and language.

**The action:** The learning environment both indoors and outdoors was improved to stimulate the development of the children's mathematical language. The children had access to a wide range of items such as shells and pine cones, which they naturally sorted into different sizes and shapes during their play; the children measured boxes with measuring tapes and rulers and they used calculators in shop and building-site play activities. The staff created interesting displays at the children's own height which promoted further their mathematical interaction.

**The impact:** The quality of the mathematical interactions between the staff and the children improved and the children's progress reports recorded an increasing range of mathematical language being used and understood throughout the year. The staff highlighted more clearly in their planning the potential mathematical language which could be developed.







## Primary education

The overall effectiveness of 78% of the primary schools inspected was evaluated as good or better...

# Going Well

The strengths include:

- ◇ the overall effectiveness is good or better in 78% of the primary schools evaluated;
- ◇ by the time children leave primary school, 82% have achieved the expected level in English and 83% in mathematics;
- ◇ there is an improving trend in children's thinking skills and personal capabilities;
- ◇ the quality of learning and teaching was evaluated as good or better in 82% of the lessons observed; and
- ◇ the quality of leadership and management at all levels has improved and it is now good or better in 78% of the schools inspected, compared with 68% in the last reporting period.

# Going Forward

There is a need to:

- ◇ further raise standards in literacy and numeracy for almost one in five children;
- ◇ improve around 18% of learning and teaching that is satisfactory or below: key areas involve developing adequately children's reading and writing skills and their mathematical understanding; and
- ◇ increase the quality of leadership and management in 22% of the schools inspected, where there is a need for a relentless pursuit of high standards and achievements for all children through highly effective learning and teaching and high levels of teacher expectation.

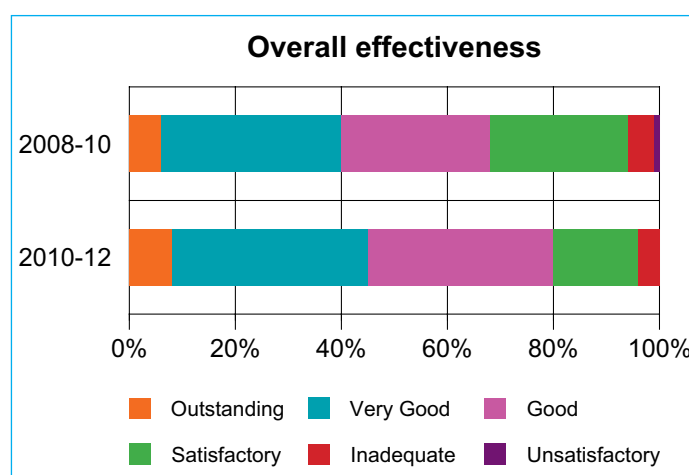
## The quality of the provision in primary schools

Inspection Evidence	
Focused inspections	145
Short inspections	103
Follow-up inspections	44
Interim follow-up visits	108
Survey visits	96
Lessons evaluated	5255

### Overall effectiveness

104. Overall effectiveness was evaluated as good or better in 78% of the schools inspected, with 34% very good and 8% outstanding. During the reporting period, the quality of provision in eight primary schools was evaluated as inadequate and the schools were placed in the FIP.
105. Of the schools in the FIP which were followed up after the initial inspection, 13 have improved their effectiveness to a level which is now satisfactory or better and

have since exited the process<sup>34</sup>. These schools brought about improvements in one or more of the following: the standards in literacy and numeracy, the incidence of underachievement, the quality of learning and teaching and the quality of leadership and management.



### Achievements and standards

106. There is an improving trend in the end of KS2 assessment outcomes in English and mathematics; 82% of children achieve the expected level in English and 83% in mathematics by the time they leave primary school. While schools are using a wide range of internal data more effectively to identify underachievement, the action taken

<sup>34</sup> 21 primary schools have entered the FIP since the introduction of the policy

is insufficient in some schools, as almost one child in five still leaves primary school not having achieved the expected level in English and mathematics.

107. Based on inspection evidence, there is still a gap in performance between those schools which serve communities with higher social deprivation and those with lower deprivation or none, as measured by entitlement to free school meals. That gap may, however, be closing. In the last reporting period, while 79% of schools serving communities with lower<sup>35</sup> or no social deprivation had achievements and standards which were evaluated by inspectors as good or better, the equivalent figure for those with higher social deprivation was 25%, a difference of some 54 percentage points. In this reporting period, the figure for schools serving communities with lower or no social deprivation is again higher, at 84%, while for schools serving communities with higher social deprivation the achievements and standards as evaluated by inspectors are good or better in 61% of schools; the gap between the two is significantly lower at 23 percentage points. This is based on the schools that were inspected in both reporting periods and while the difference may depend on the sample of schools inspected, it is noteworthy.
108. By addressing underachievement, overall standards within the school improve and, more importantly, the achievements, standards and life chances of each individual child are better. In a minority of the schools in which achievements and standards were evaluated as less than satisfactory, the children's literacy and numeracy skills are underdeveloped. Importantly, the development of reading is a key area for improvement within all key stages.
109. There is an improving trend in the development of children's thinking skills and personal capabilities due, in the main, to teachers' effective implementation of this key aspect of the NIC. In schools which have put an appropriate focus on these skills and integrated them almost seamlessly into teaching, the children achieve very good outcomes and are able to apply their knowledge and understanding

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35 Lower levels of FSME are defined as up to 29.99%



across all areas of their learning. By contrast, where thinking skills were taught in isolation from a relevant context, understanding was poor and learning was fragmented.

### The quality of the provision for learning

110. The quality of provision for learning was evaluated as good or better in 80% of the schools inspected; it was satisfactory or inadequate in the remaining 20%. The quality of learning and teaching was evaluated as good or better in 82% of the lessons observed; in one-half it was very good or outstanding.
111. Where improvement is required, in nearly one in five instances teaching does not build sufficiently on prior learning and does not develop adequately the children's reading and writing skills and mathematical understanding. Short-term planning needs to take greater account of how children learn and of individual and group learning needs, based on a sound understanding of each child's attainment and stage of development.

112. The key characteristics of very good and outstanding teaching include: having a clear emphasis on the quality of the children's learning, ensuring that all children regardless of their ability make good progress and using the outcomes and feedback from children to inform future planning and teaching. Where teaching is most improved, school leaders facilitate purposeful external links with the very good and outstanding schools to share good practice and develop teaching expertise further through participation in professional development courses organised by educational support agencies.

### Leadership and management

113. The quality of leadership and management at all levels has improved. It is now good or better in 78% of the schools inspected, compared with 68% in the last reporting period; in around 51% of schools, it was evaluated as very good or outstanding. Key to this improvement is the developing culture of self-evaluation and the effective school development planning process in 75% of the schools inspected. School leadership teams have recognised that a crucial factor in whole-school

improvement has been the further development of the middle management role in leading, implementing and evaluating curricular provision and outcomes.

114. An ongoing challenge for governance continues to be the prioritising of financial resources in order to meet the learning needs of the children and the training needs of the staff.



## Achieving value

115. While the outcomes for children at the end of KS2, as measured by KS2 assessments, continue to show an upward and improving trend, the outcomes for almost one in five children are not good enough. In order to improve the standards in reading within all key stages, schools need to use a broad range of approaches in addition to the systematic development of

children's phonics skills, as indicated in Count, Read and Succeed<sup>36</sup>. Regarding mathematics, schools need to place a greater emphasis on the development of children's mathematical language, through improving questioning and talking and listening, in order to enable children to articulate their thinking more effectively.

## Learning skills

116. As with the previous reporting period, progression and continuity in the children's key skills in literacy and numeracy through play remains an area for development. A greater number of primary schools need to develop stronger links at key transition stages, from pre-school to FS, from FS to KS1, from KS1 to KS2, and between the primary school and the post-primary phase in order to provide more coherence

in children's development and learning.

117. The FS was identified as an area for improvement in approximately 25% of schools inspected. Planning and teaching in the FS must take greater cognisance of each child's ability and stage of development and ensure that provision is matched closely to each child to facilitate progress in the core literacy and numeracy skills.

<sup>36</sup> Count, Read, Succeed: a Strategy to Improve Outcomes in Literacy and Numeracy (DE, 2010)



## Transforming communities

118. In some areas, schools are failing to break the cycle of underachievement that has persisted over a period of time. Many schools serving disadvantaged communities are successful in providing high-quality education. Inspection findings confirm this to be the case and the achievements and standards of these children are good or better. To address more effectively the

cycle of underachievement, schools need to work together to develop further the links with parents.

Greater collaboration is needed to share and develop good practice across the controlled, integrated and maintained sectors, in order to promote a greater consistency in the educational outcomes for all children within an area.

Schools need to build on the good examples of well-developed PDMU programmes to develop further children's understanding of, and respect for, other traditions.



# Case study

Improving standards in a primary school with a high free school meal entitlement



**The issue:** The school, which currently has 64% of its children entitled to free school meals, does not accept social and economic disadvantage as a barrier to learning and achievement. Improving children's literacy and numeracy skills are key to school improvement, particularly in the area of developing boys as confident readers.

**The action:** The Principal and staff promote an ethos of high achievement and ensure that all physical, personal, social and emotional needs are addressed. The school analyses rigorously the performance data against the children's ability twice a year and is able to identify the learning needs for individual pupils and cohorts of children who have difficulty with reading. To address this issue, the staff agreed a range of approaches which included an accelerated reading programme, a focus on the teaching of reading and the use of competitions, incentives and awards in order to engage boys more fully.

**The impact:** The whole-school approach to literacy has resulted in more coherent planning which benefits the children. The boys are more engaged and confident and, as a result, their talking and listening, comprehension and writing skills have improved. Progression is a strength in the school's literacy provision and consequently, by the end of KS2, the school outperforms schools with a similar free school meals entitlement.

# Case study

**Raising standards in an IM school through embedding a culture of self-evaluation**



**The issue:** An inspection report identified the need to develop strategic leadership, to promote self-evaluation, and to establish effective structures to monitor and evaluate provision and outcomes with a view to raising the low standards achieved by the children at the end of KS2.

**The action:** The school produced a well-focused school development plan to address the areas for improvement and introduced a wider range of learning and teaching strategies in both literacy and numeracy to ensure better progression in the children's learning experiences and outcomes. The teachers made more focused use of data to assess the children's progress and set targets for improvement. The Principal established an effective framework for the systematic monitoring and evaluation of teaching and planning, and instigated a programme of regular classroom observations.

**The impact:** The actions taken by the school led to significant improvement in the standards of all of the children's work and, in particular, for the KS2 children. This IM school, which had been in the FIP, was transformed into a high-quality, better-performing school through a unique focus on the core business of school improvement, the renewed emphasis on quality learning and teaching throughout the school and the enhancement of the teachers' continuous professional development. A culture of self-evaluation became embedded within the school's practices and procedures.





## Post-primary education

The overall effectiveness of 65% of the post-primary schools inspected was evaluated as good or better...

# Going Well

The strengths include:

- ◇ the overall effectiveness in almost two out of three of the post-primary schools, which had standard inspections during the reporting period, was evaluated as good or better;
- ◇ achievements and standards were evaluated as good or better in 68% of the schools inspected;
- ◇ the achievements of school leavers gaining five GCSEs A\* - C (including equivalents) has increased steadily to 73.2%, while 64.5% of pupils entered for A level (or equivalent) examinations achieved grades A\* - C in three subjects;
- ◇ schools are generally effective at supporting the personal and social development of young people; pastoral care was found to be good or better in most schools; and
- ◇ CEIAG provision has improved, from a low base, to good or better in 68% of schools inspected.

# Going Forward

There is a need to:

- ◇ improve outcomes for all pupils at GCSE in English and mathematics given that only 59% of school leavers attain at least five GCSEs at grades A\*- C, and equivalents including English and mathematics, and particularly for those entitled to free school meals, where less than one in three reach this standard;
- ◇ ensure a greater emphasis on the effective monitoring and evaluation of the quality of provision, where actions to promote improvement were not good enough in nearly 50% of all schools inspected; and
- ◇ improve the quality of leadership and management in around 39% of schools inspected.

## The quality of the provision in post-primary schools

Inspection Evidence	
Standard inspections	62
Follow-up inspections	18
Interim follow-up visits	41
Survey visits	47
Lessons evaluated	4026

### Overall effectiveness

119. Of the 62 post-primary schools which were subject to a standard inspection during the reporting period, overall effectiveness was evaluated as good or better in 65% of schools<sup>37</sup>. This drops to 59% when added to outcomes of 18 follow-up inspections during the reporting period<sup>38</sup>. The quality of education in seven post-primary schools was evaluated as inadequate or unsatisfactory

and subsequently, these schools were placed in the FIP. A total of 11 post-primary schools are currently in the FIP<sup>39</sup>.

120. Where provision was previously evaluated as satisfactory or below and is now improved, staff have taken collective responsibility for the work of the school. They have built capacity at every level and ultimately created a stronger and more effective school community in line with Every School a Good School.
121. Low attainment in public examinations is a key feature of most of the schools where overall effectiveness has been evaluated as satisfactory or below. Inspection evidence, supported by research, indicates that in these schools the attendant complexities have developed over a significant period of time and there have been clear identifiable trends of under-achievement. The resulting outcome is that, irrespective of the level of support or an expressed commitment to change,

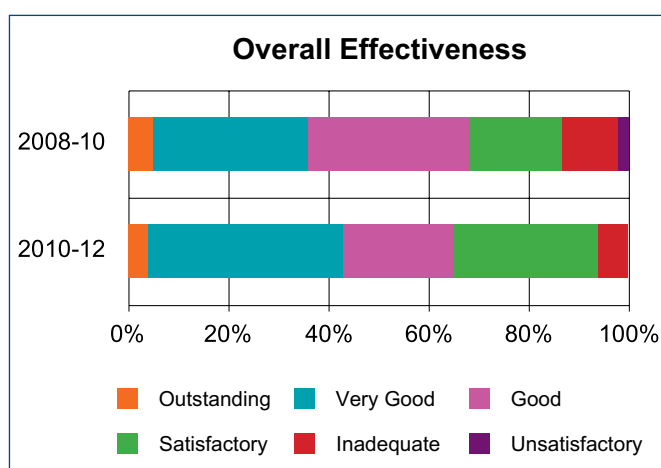
37 In a post-primary school, a standard inspection is an evaluation of leadership and management, quality of the provision and achievements and standards across the whole school

38 A follow-up inspection is a subsequent evaluation which assesses the progress made on important areas for improvement identified in the original standard inspection

39 A total of 13 schools have entered the FIP since its introduction. One school has exited and one school has closed

improvement is difficult to effect within timescales that will impact positively on the outcomes for all of the young people currently attending that school.

122. In contrast, there are examples in this reporting period where inspection has identified instances of under-achievement and, in responding promptly, schools have made significant improvement. Schools and their employing authorities need to use the wealth of data available to them to identify trends in outcomes and take action to prevent ongoing decline before low expectations become endemic in the organisation.



## Achievements and standards

123. Achievements and standards were evaluated as good or better in 68% of the schools inspected and less than satisfactory in 10% of the schools inspected.
124. At GCE Advanced level, the percentage of pupils in all schools entered for A levels or equivalent and achieving a grade A\* - C in three or more subjects has increased over the last five years to 64.5% in 2010-11<sup>40</sup>.
125. Achievement of five GCSEs A\* - C (including equivalent qualifications) for school leavers has increased steadily over recent years, to 73.2% in 2010-11<sup>41</sup>. This figure drops to 59.5% when GCSE English and mathematics are included. However, only 32% of school leavers, entitled to free school meals, achieved five GCSEs A\* - C (including equivalent qualifications) including GCSE English and mathematics in 2010-11. The figure is 22% for school leavers from non-selective schools and 87% for those from selective schools. Raising the standards attained by those from

40 School Development Planning and Target Setting (Post-primary) Circular 2012/03. Department of Education 14 March 2012

41 Qualifications and Destinations of Northern Ireland School Leavers 2010-11 (revised)



disadvantaged backgrounds remains a priority for schools and support organisations.

126. The proportion of pupils leaving school with no GCSEs or equivalent qualifications has decreased to 2.2%, but needs to reduce further.
127. There is too wide a variation in the performance of those non-selective schools which serve communities with higher levels of social deprivation compared to those with lower<sup>42</sup> or none. Around 57% of the non-selective schools inspected, which serve communities with lower levels of social deprivation, had achievements and standards which were good or better. However, the equivalent figure for non-selective schools with higher social deprivation was 38%, a difference of around 19 percentage points.
128. Improvements in English and in mathematics remain a key priority. The primary and post-primary sectors need to work together to address deficits in children's literacy, before, during and after their transition to post-primary education to ensure children can read

sufficiently well to access learning in all of their other subjects.

### The quality of the provision for learning

129. Curriculum provision was evaluated as good or better in 67% of the schools inspected. Longer-term curriculum planning is becoming well embedded at KS3, with an appropriately increased focus on learning and the development of skills. At KS4 and post-16, good provision is characterised by a coherent approach and a broad, balanced programme of learning which provides pupils with clear progression opportunities and enriches their holistic development.
130. Just over 76% of the lessons observed were evaluated as good or better, with 39% being very good or outstanding. In the best practice, teachers enquire of their pupils what is needed to help them learn better, reflect upon the learning that has taken place and modify their lessons accordingly.
131. Weaker lessons often lack clarity and understanding about

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<sup>42</sup> Lower levels of FSME are defined as up to 29.99%

assessment for learning strategies. In particular, there is ineffective use of assessment to inform the planning of a series of lessons and to address pupils' individual needs. In addition, ICT is not being used well enough to support learning.

multilingual and multicultural society and the variety of jobs, professions and careers available. Where the school promotes, values and supports languages effectively as a core element of the curriculum, pupils make good progress<sup>43</sup>.

132. The proportion of schools in which the CEIAG was evaluated as good or better has almost doubled since the last reporting period, rising from 35% to 68%. Effective CEIAG helps ensure that progression and access to the Entitlement Framework are not hindered by ill-informed choices or a lack of choice.
133. There are good examples of organisations working collaboratively, through ALCs, to widen the range of courses to which pupils have access. However, in almost 33% of schools inspected, further work is required to enable the pupils to make informed choices, to facilitate progression and to support their career aspirations.
134. The decline in the uptake of modern languages at KS4 does not sit well with our increasing
135. Throughout the reporting period, there has been an increase in the number of pupils identified as having special educational needs (SEN). Schools report a rise in the number of pupils presenting with a more complex range of cognitive, physical, emotional and/or linguistic needs. The provision for SEN was good or better in 59% of the schools inspected, but with outstanding provision in only 7% of schools.
136. The most effective practice in relation to SEN is characterised by good processes for assessment, tracking and communicating progress, with appropriate intervention strategies and pastoral support. In less effective practice, the actions and targets arising from individual education plans are not specific enough, or well enough understood and there is insufficient

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43 A Short Report on the Provision for Modern Languages in a Sample of Non-Selective Schools (2011) ETI

monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of the provision.

137. The quality of pastoral care in enhancing the welfare, personal development and academic achievement of learners remains good or better in 88% of the schools inspected. Where pastoral care was evaluated as less than good, teachers' expectations of learners are too low and there are insufficient arrangements for pupils to contribute meaningfully to the life and work of the school.

### Leadership and management

138. Leadership and management at all levels are good or better in 61% of the schools inspected. Where provision is good or better, leaders have a clear focus on improving pupil outcomes. This focus includes the accurate identification of pupils' needs; the provision of high quality learning and teaching, supported by appropriate staff development; and, the effective monitoring and evaluation of the quality of the provision. Action to promote improvement was evaluated as good or better in 52% of the schools inspected.
139. Significant challenges exist for school leaders, such as falling enrolments, budget deficits, curriculum change and the need for effective collaboration. In almost one in five schools inspected, the leadership of the Principal was evaluated as less than satisfactory, which represents no significant change from the previous two reporting periods. The overall quality of middle management was good or better in 66% of the schools inspected. This is similar to the previous reporting period. Effective monitoring and evaluation by middle management to improve teaching and learning remains a key priority.
140. Inspection evidence indicates a number of interrelated weaknesses which require coherent, co-ordinated leadership for improvement over the next reporting period. A fragmented approach to leadership development, which is not responding quickly or effectively enough to the changing needs of our education system, is evident.

## Achieving value

141. It is important for school leaders and governors to consider and evaluate to what extent the school is operationally effective, viable, provides value for money, meets the expectations of its stakeholders, especially its pupils, parents and carers, and fulfils the DE's expectation that every school is a good school.
142. In doing so, school leaders need to link coherently, through the school development plan, the various improvement actions required across each area of the school's provision. Senior leaders need to promote staff development in self-evaluation leading to improvement.
143. There is a clear need to improve the effectiveness of school leaders at all levels in the well-targeted deployment of resources to provide high-quality education and to raise expectations, aspirations and, as a consequence, standards for all pupils.
144. Leadership, in the context of reform, requires of school principals a much broader base of multi-disciplinary skills and professional knowledge than before and, consequently, there is a need for appropriately designed leadership development programmes which are capable of supporting leaders for 21<sup>st</sup> century schools.

## Learning skills

145. There is an appropriate focus on learning and skills development at KS3. However, the continuity and progression of such learning into KS4 is not as effective, especially where there is too narrow a focus on subject content for examination requirements rather than on effective learning and teaching.
146. When the curriculum at KS4 and post-16 is broad and balanced, pupils have access to a wide range of general and applied programmes, personalised learning, including private study and life-skills, extra-curricular activities, and impartial careers guidance.
147. Given the significant investment in ICT over recent years, it is disappointing to note the poor outcomes and experiences for many pupils. The very wide variation between schools in the quality of the leadership of, and teaching with, ICT is resulting in the insufficient and ineffective use of ICT to support and enhance learning. The use of ICT to improve teaching and enhance learning remains an urgent priority for post-primary schools.



## Transforming communities

148. Life chances are improved through high-quality education supported by the high aspirations of pupils, their parents and carers, as well as their community. Schools, through their development plans, need to engage parents and carers in the common purpose of improving the attainment of every pupil and challenging the poverty of aspiration, where it is found to exist.
149. There is a strong link between underachievement and social disadvantage. In some schools, and in particular within the controlled sector, there is persistent underachievement and low educational outcomes for the learners. The Programme for Government 2011-15 has set challenging targets to increase the proportion of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds who achieve at least five GCSEs at A\*-C or equivalent, including English and mathematics, from the current figure of 32% to 49% by 2014-15. This represents a significant challenge as the PISA (2009) report states that Northern Ireland, with this 17 percentage point gap, has one of the largest achievement gaps between those pupils who are highest and lowest on the socio-economic scale.
150. School leaders need to continue to place the interests of the pupil first. They need to work more collaboratively across communities and across the range of provision available, in order to improve access to suitable and high-quality courses for all pupils.

# Case study

Using ICT to improve the quality of learning and teaching across the curriculum



**The issue:** The potential of ICT as a learning and teaching tool was not being fully utilised across the school. Teachers were not aware of pupils' prior learning and attainment in using ICT. Many opportunities to improve learning and teaching, using ICT, were being missed.

**The action:** The Senior Leadership Team prioritised ICT in the school development planning process with effective action plans, which had clear and measurable success criteria. These were monitored, evaluated and reviewed. A systematic staff development programme, focusing on the development of pedagogic skills for effective learning and teaching with, and through, ICT was devised. Furthermore, a baseline assessment of the pupils' prior learning and skill levels in ICT on entry to the school at year 8 was conducted and shared with all staff, and ICT activities were planned to enable progression in the skills.

**The impact:** Teachers built upon the pupils' prior learning and skill levels, to ensure that activities were better matched to the pupils' needs and that they benefited from more challenging learning experiences. The school embedded the use of ICT across the curriculum and staff are now better informed and prepared for the introduction of the statutory assessment of Using ICT at KS3.



# Case study

The learning and teaching of modern languages to pupils of all abilities



**The issue:** With uptake in modern languages declining in the non-selective sector, this school addressed the issue by offering a second language to all pupils, including those with a reading age below average in English. The school wanted modern languages provision to be an engaging and enjoyable experience for its pupils.

**The action:** More effective learning and teaching approaches were adopted. Lessons were characterised by lively teaching. A brisk warm-up exchange at the start of class ensured that prior learning was recalled and that new language was built progressively into the programme. Language was then practised and rehearsed through games, competitions and role-play with appropriate drama props incorporated into a wide range of suitable scenarios.

**The impact:** The teaching approaches engaged the pupils in active learning and appealed, in particular, to the learning preferences of boys. All of the pupils, including those with SEN, gained confidence and became more proficient in spoken French. They speak the language extensively and are challenged to achieve their personal best.



## Special educational needs and inclusion

The overall effectiveness of 90% of the special schools inspected was evaluated as good or better...

# Going Well

The strengths include:

- ◇ achievements and standards in special schools have improved and school leavers are achieving good or better levels of accreditation;
- ◇ in the best practice teachers are using pupil learning profiles effectively to plan more individual learning approaches;
- ◇ the profile of, and the priority given to, SEN have improved in mainstream schools;
- ◇ post-primary schools are developing a greater capacity to cope with pupils who have challenging behaviours; and
- ◇ the links between AEP and mainstream schools have improved and are improving the outcomes for pupils.

# Going Forward

There is a need to:

- ◇ reduce the growing pupil numbers on SEN registers and those with statements in mainstream schools;
- ◇ reduce the dependency on external support, particularly in primary schools, through improving the capacity of staff to meet the identified needs earlier and more effectively; and
- ◇ raise further the achievements and standards in EOTAS provision as well as improving the quality of accommodation, security and resources for a majority of the pupils.

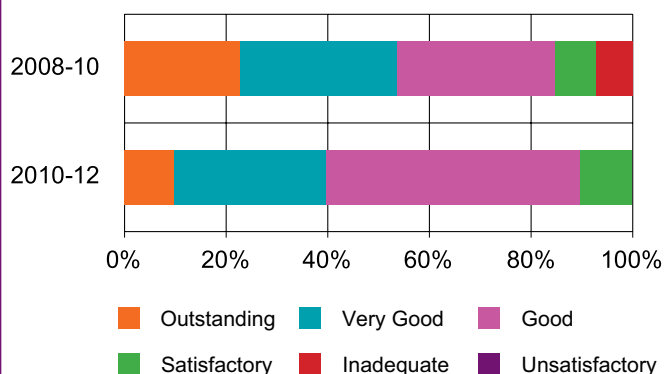
## The quality of the provision in special educational needs and inclusion

Inspection Evidence <sup>44</sup>	
Major surveys	8
Special school inspections	10
Follow-up inspections	2
EOTAS including AEP inspections	2
Evaluations of SEN in mainstream organisations	363
Follow-up visits	25
Lessons evaluated	455

### Overall effectiveness

151. During the reporting period, the overall effectiveness of 90% of the special schools inspected was evaluated as good or better.

Overall effectiveness of special schools



### Achievements and standards

152. Achievements and standards in special schools have improved during the reporting period. School leavers, in particular, are achieving good or better levels of accreditation as a result of the higher profile which schools have given to this area within their school development planning. Schools have also invested in creating better and more relevant further education transition pathways for pupils.
153. Individual education plans have improved due to the inclusion of individual learning profiles which effectively identify how pupils learn best. They also set long-term

<sup>44</sup> This evidence base covers EOTAS including Alternative Education Provision inspections and SEN in mainstream schools

outcomes which contribute to raising standards.

### The quality of the provision for learning

154. In almost all of the lessons observed in special schools over the period, the quality of learning and teaching was good or better, with almost 20% evaluated as outstanding. In addition, the use of ICT to support learning and teaching was of a very good or outstanding quality in almost 90% of the lessons observed. The level of ICT skills and expertise of the staff have increased considerably over the reporting period.
155. Pupils have also benefited greatly from improved CEIAG provision. All special schools favour, and are developing, a supporting role to assist mainstream schools and pupils with special educational needs. However, the special schools' outreach and learning support work has not developed consistently across the ELBs.

### Leadership and management

156. Effective leadership and management are the most

significant factors in leading to improvements in the quality of provision in special schools. Where there is very good or better leadership, in approximately 40% of the schools inspected, the senior management has built the capacity of staff to work purposefully as a team to meet a wider range of pupils' needs.

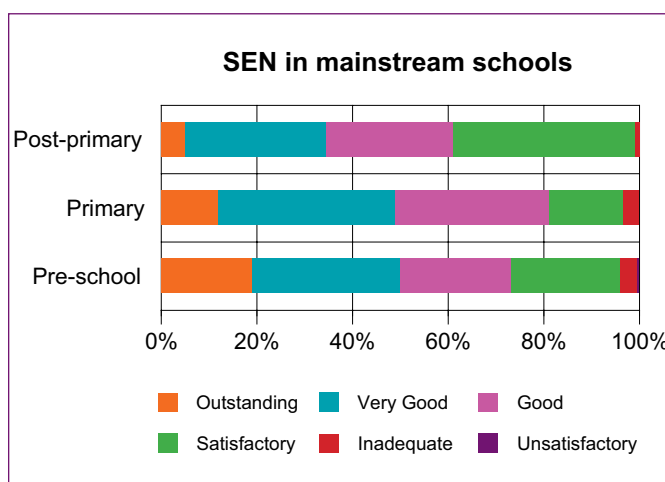
157. The more effective senior leadership teams in special schools ensure transition arrangements are focused more effectively on the longer-term placement and aspirations of school leavers and on their well-being. Securing an appropriate placement within adult service provision is becoming increasingly difficult, in particular, for a small minority of pupils with more complex sensory and dependent learning needs and others with persistent levels of challenging and aggressive behaviour. The DE, the ELBs and the Health and Social Care Trusts need to work more closely and purposefully together to secure appropriate placements for this group of young people.



### Education other than at school (including alternative education provision for pupils at KS3 and KS4)

158. The ELBs report a slight reduction in the number of young people referred to education other than at school (EOTAS). There is an urgent need to raise further achievements and standards in EOTAS provision, as well as the quality of accommodation, security and resources for a majority of the pupils across the ELBs. The DE and the ELBs need to develop a more coherent strategic approach to providing cohesive and equitable alternative education across Northern Ireland, building on the evident improvements in the links between post-primary schools and EOTAS centres.
159. The lack of access to C2k provision within many EOTAS centres inhibits the effective transfer of baseline assessment information across the sectors and, as a consequence, pupils are unable to access or develop their e-folders. The piloting of e-learning in two EOTAS centres has been effective in helping to motivate the pupils to develop their interest in learning and to re-engage with education.
160. The links between the different education providers within the ALCs have not developed sufficiently to enable the young people in EOTAS to attend classes in their mainstream school, to learn alongside their peers and to access the wider curriculum where appropriate.
161. Post-primary schools are developing a greater capacity to cope with pupils who have challenging behaviours. However, the reasons for referral to EOTAS have become more complex, with many pupils now presenting with multiple issues, including mental health and learning difficulties. Staff in most of the post-primary schools inspected visit regularly the pupils who have been placed in EOTAS provision, to monitor their pastoral and academic progress. There is very good practice in a small number of schools and EOTAS providers in successfully re-integrating the pupils into school.
162. Where there is good quality CEIAG, in addition to good individual support, most of the young people are progressing into further education, training or employment. The very good or better pastoral support in most EOTAS centres

enables the pupils to make progress on a personal, social and emotional level. However, the centres need to ensure that young people gain sufficient academic and vocational qualifications to support their transition to further education, employment or training. Over 20% of the learners currently do not have the opportunity to engage in vocational education programmes.



### Special educational needs in the mainstream sector

163. The overall quality of additional support for learning across mainstream schools, for those pupils who require it, shows an improving trend. The priority given to SEN across schools has developed and improved considerably since 2008, although it is a matter of concern that the improvement is slower in post-primary schools than in the pre-school or primary phases.

164. The development of effective working between the mainstream sector and the special schools sector has been steady. Consequently, pupils from both sectors benefit both pastorally and academically from the shared learning experiences<sup>45</sup>. The examples of successful collaboration between special schools and neighbouring mainstream schools confirm the importance of shared working in the interests of all pupils<sup>46</sup>.

165. The quality of the SEN support is good or better in 73% of the pre-school settings inspected and outstanding in 21%. The remaining settings need to ensure that all teaching and support staff are more

<sup>45</sup> Special Schools Journeys to Inclusion (ETI, 2011)

<sup>46</sup> Learning across the Continuum (ETI, 2012)



consistent in the accurate, early identification of additional needs and the provision of support for those pupils who are experiencing difficulties, especially in relation to language and communication.

166. The support for children with SEN is of a good or better quality in just over 82% of the primary schools inspected. At present, the number of pupils on SEN registers in primary schools has grown to a significantly high level. The schools refer some 44% of these pupils to external agencies to help meet their needs. Primary schools must do more to reduce this dependency on external support. They also need to improve the capacity within the school to meet the identified needs earlier and more effectively through learning and teaching.
167. Approximately 62% of IM primary schools provide good or better additional support for those pupils requiring it with aspects of their learning. The SEN co-ordinators share good practice, including more effective approaches to early identification and interventions. This good practice could inform the

IM pre-school sector, in which the provision is mostly satisfactory, with significant improvements required in a minority of settings.

168. In 41% of the post-primary schools inspected, the analysis of data to identify and meet pupils' special educational needs is insufficient. The monitoring and evaluation of the provision shows that action is required to ensure that all staff have a better understanding of SEN. In the small number of schools where the provision is outstanding, there is a whole-school approach to identifying a comprehensive range of individual needs. These schools have very effective systems for assessment, tracking and communicating progress, and they use this information well to put together appropriate intervention strategies and pastoral support.
169. Following the inspection report of 2009<sup>47</sup>, further education colleges have effectively used additional funding allocated by the DEL, to promote collaborative working to support students with learning difficulties and disabilities

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47 An evaluation of provision for learners with special educational needs or disabilities in further education and Training for Success (2009) ETI

to make progress. There have been significant improvements in this provision, such as student mentoring by key staff and staff training to provide focused support for those students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

170. Several major surveys relating to specific special needs were published during the reporting period. The provision for pupils with dyslexia is good or better in 96% of the schools visited; in a minority of schools the provision is outstanding<sup>48</sup>. In most instances, pupils with a visual impairment make good progress in their learning and in developing their capacity to cope with their disability<sup>49</sup>.

## Special educational needs in Europe

171. During the reporting period, the DE and the ETI have made an active contribution to the work of the wider European Agency for Special Needs Education. Participating inspectors showcased successfully best practice in vocational education, early childhood education and initial teacher education. More recently, they made a significant contribution to the Key Principles for Promoting Quality in Inclusive Education: Recommendations for Practice.



Three young people from Northern Ireland presenting their views on inclusive education to members of the European Parliament in Brussels, in October 2011.

<sup>48</sup> A survey of the provision for pupils with dyslexia (2012) ETI

<sup>49</sup> Report of an evaluation of provision for pupils with a visual impairment in mainstream schools in Northern Ireland (2012) ETI

## Achieving value

172. A significant factor in reducing the incidence of low achievement among some pupils is building the capacity of staff to identify and address SEN. This requires the DE

and the ELBs to consider how best to bring special and mainstream schools into greater working partnerships where good practice can be shared. The realignment and sharing of SEN resources is a significant challenge, but one which will build a more inclusive education community.

## Learning skills

173. More inclusive learning and teaching requires teachers to have the skills and knowledge to enable pupils of differing abilities to learn well together. Lessons must be well-planned with differentiation and individualised learning assessment and support. As part of building the capacity of teachers to promote a more inclusive

classroom, the management within and across schools must be focused and collaborative, in order to meet the needs of all of the pupils.

174. The findings of the evaluation of the initial teacher education-SEN pilot indicates that the pilot has raised the profile of SEN in both of the universities' Post-graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) programmes and has enabled student teachers to develop their skills to identify and address SEN<sup>50</sup>.

<sup>50</sup> An evaluation of the joint post-primary post-graduate certificate in education: main subject with special education and inclusion by Queen's University and the University of Ulster (2012)

## Transforming communities

175. The improvement of the quality of learning and teaching across the sectors and the tackling of underachievement by senior leaders are central to increasing access and equity for all pupils. The ongoing review of the provision for SEN, for legislative consideration during 2012-2013, needs to continue to build the capacity of staff through the dissemination of effective learning and teaching strategies for SEN in the classroom.
176. Pupils within alternative education provision risk being marginalised. Along with the ELBs, post-primary schools and EOTAS centres need to work more purposefully together to plan and provide more effective learning pathways which reflect the differing needs of these pupils.
177. Coherent strategic policies and services to inform SEN practice have not developed consistently or significantly across the ELBs over the reporting period: there needs to be a greater commonality of approach if the provision for pupils with SEN is to develop cohesively and equitably.







## Teacher education and leadership development

The quality of almost all of the teaching and reflective practice by the beginning teachers on induction was good; in two out of three cases it was very good or outstanding...

# Going Well

The strengths include:

- ◇ the preparation by the initial teacher education providers of their student teachers to address the demands of the Northern Ireland Curriculum;
- ◇ the increasing reflection of learning and teaching given that many student teachers are aware of the need to reflect on, and analyse critically, their own teaching in order to improve continuously their practice; and
- ◇ the quality of support provided by the school during the induction of beginning teacher through the teacher-tutor, which was very good or outstanding in around 80% of schools.

# Going Forward

There is a need to:

- ◇ improve the continuity and continuous progression in professional learning for teachers throughout the various stages in their career;
- ◇ reduce the variation during initial teacher education in preparing for teaching aspects of numeracy in post-primary schools; and
- ◇ increase the flexibility of the Curriculum Advisory and Support Services and the schools in how they manage the responsibility for supporting beginning teachers who are on short-term contracts, to enable them to complete induction.

## The quality of the provision for teacher education and leadership development

Teachers visited in schools:	146
ITE sessions inspected:	87

178. In line with the findings from previous reports, effecting improvements in literacy and numeracy continues to be a vital element in initial teacher education (ITE) and in the induction of beginning teachers.

## Initial teacher education

### Achievements and standards

179. Despite some weaknesses evident in aspects of the personal literacy and numeracy of a minority of student teachers, they have appropriate knowledge of the expectations and demands of the curriculum and are aware of the

need to reflect continuously on teaching and learning in order to improve their practice. Many student teachers have begun to analyse critically their teaching performance. However, the evaluation of the effect of their teaching, in taking learning forward, is underdeveloped.

### The quality of the provision for learning

180. During the reporting period, ETI completed inspections of seven post-graduate programmes<sup>51</sup> provided by St Mary's University College, Stranmillis University College, Queen's University, Belfast, the University of Ulster and the Open University, as part of DE's process of approving ITE programmes<sup>52</sup>. While, in each case, the full programme was evaluated, the focus was on literacy and numeracy across the school curriculum. The overall findings are that ITE providers have made successful adjustments to prepare student teachers to address the demands of the NIC.

51 <http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/inspection-reports/inspection-reports-higher-education-initial-teacher-education.htm> (ETI, 2010)

52 Initial Teacher Education, Approval of Programmes [http://www.deni.gov.uk/ite\\_approval\\_of\\_programmes\\_circular\\_-\\_english\\_version-2.pdf](http://www.deni.gov.uk/ite_approval_of_programmes_circular_-_english_version-2.pdf) (DE, 2010)



## Leadership and management

181. There is a variation in the preparation for teaching aspects of numeracy in the post-primary sector. All ITE providers would benefit from developing a shared understanding of what numeracy entails, and from evaluating the extent to which all students acquire the knowledge and understanding to improve their pupils' development of numeracy skills through their teaching.
182. In ITE, areas of best practice should be disseminated more widely to benefit students' learning. These include the outcomes of observations of outstanding lessons which focus appropriately on the key stages of mathematical development and on the learners' outcomes; the modelling of teaching numeracy and the collective evaluation of practice; and the assessment and use of teaching approaches which are appropriate to meet the numeracy needs of all learners.
183. Effective continuity and progression from the initial to the early teacher

education stage depends on the relationship between the ITE providers and the CASS. They need to work closely with the employing school to provide support based on the individual portfolio of needs for the teacher to become an effective, adaptable practitioner. The schools have a critical role throughout induction and early professional development to help the beginning teachers to evaluate longer-term improvements in literacy and numeracy as they take responsibility for teaching classes over extended periods of time.

## Induction of beginning teachers

184. In order to consider the effectiveness of the continuity and progression from the initial to the early teacher education stage, ETI conducted an evaluation of induction provision.<sup>53</sup>

## Achievement and standards

185. The quality of almost all of the teaching and reflective practice by the beginning teachers on induction

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53 An Evaluation of the Induction Programme for Beginning Teachers (ETI, November 2011)

was good; in two out of three cases it was very good or outstanding. Furthermore, in four-fifths of schools visited, the quality of support provided by the school, through the teacher-tutor, was very good or outstanding.

### The quality of the provision for learning

186. At the time of the survey in 2011, only 22% of teachers who graduated from Higher Education Institutions in 2010 and registered with the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI), had obtained a permanent teaching post or a post of a significant temporary nature (one term at least). Given this situation, CASS needs to be flexible and to support schools in taking on responsibility for beginning teachers who are on short-term contracts to enable them to complete induction within a year. Beginning teachers need to adapt their Career Entry Profile to the circumstances of their post and to take the lead responsibility for their own professional development.
187. With limited permanent teaching posts available, many beginning teachers are choosing to prioritise making a significant contribution to

the school at the cost of attending to their own personal development needs. In order to support beginning teachers' development, schools need to establish flexible arrangements for them to be observed and to observe lessons, to attend relevant in-service training courses, and to avail of the recommended 10% remission of their teaching load.

### Leadership and management

188. As part of the ongoing Teacher Education Review, and in light of the reductions in CASS, it is important that the DE places the school at the centre of teacher development, including that of the beginning teacher. In doing so, it needs to outline clearly the role of all of the ITE providers in the induction of beginning teachers.

## Leadership development

### The quality of the provision for learning

189. The ETI evaluated the quality and effectiveness of the leadership development programmes available to those aspiring to

headship in Northern Ireland's schools<sup>54</sup>. The revised Professional Qualification for Headship PQH (NI) programme represents some improvements over the original programme. In particular, the competency-based approach taken to professional development, the role of 'coach' as developed in the revised programme, which is highly regarded by both PQH (NI) graduates and by the coaches themselves, and the opportunity for a short placement for trainee head-teachers in other schools.

190. Furthermore, in order to ensure comparability in the standards of the provision, and therefore transferability with the programmes for the preparation for headship in England and Wales, the new model draws significantly on the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) standards which have been developed in the context of the education service in England.

## Achievement and standards

191. Inspection evidence indicates that effective leadership is key to breaking a sustained cycle of low and underachievement and to address school underperformance. Actions taken to promote improvement have been evaluated as the least effective of all aspects of school leadership, being less than effective in almost half of post-primary schools.

## Leadership and management

192. Given that tackling educational underachievement and raising standards, especially for lower achievers, is a key principle of the DE's policy Every School A Good School, and school leaders have a leading role in bringing about improvement for all learners, this goal ought to attract the highest priority in any school leadership development programme.

## Achieving value

193. Good leadership is essential at all levels of the school system if underachievement is to be addressed effectively. Leadership requires all educators throughout the organisation to take responsibility for all of the pupils, demonstrating effective pastoral care through having high expectations and

standards. Yet inspection evidence continues to show concerning levels of inadequate leadership which is failing to turn around underachieving schools. Teacher education and leadership development programmes need to ensure much greater continuity and progression, especially in developing those essential leadership behaviours which should emerge from the earliest stages of teacher education.

## Learning skills

194. High-level skills in literacy and numeracy are essential foundations for all pupils of the ability to learn. It is not solely the responsibility of teachers of English and of

mathematics to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. It is essential that all teachers are better equipped and are supported well, to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding of how to develop these skills within the context of all learning and teaching.

## Transforming communities

195. During the reporting period, inspection evidence on ITE, on induction and on leadership development, taken as a whole, points to fragmentation and discontinuity in career-long professional learning for teachers. The effectiveness of the

contribution of individual partners including the ELBs and higher education institutions, is diminished by the lack of overarching partnership coordination and a common framework for capacity building and improvement. Schools themselves, in the most mature area learning communities, are supporting each other to help their teachers achieve professional learning goals.







## Further education

The overall effectiveness of 80% of all the further education provision evaluated was good or better...



# Going Well

The strengths include:

- ◇ the consolidation and further development of the six regional colleges, where the overall effectiveness of 80% of the provision inspected was good or better;
- ◇ overall success rates across the further education sector have increased from 61% in 2009-10 to 70% in 2010-11, while average retention rates remained steady at around 88%;
- ◇ the quality of learning and teaching in most of the lessons observed was good or better (81%), with a significant minority (44%), very good or outstanding;
- ◇ the significant investment in the further education infrastructure leaves the colleges well placed to lead on the delivery of a high quality, flexible and economically relevant curriculum; and
- ◇ through a wide range of outreach and mainstream adult provision, the colleges provide communities with good access to education and training opportunities at a range of levels.

# Going Forward

There is a need to:

- ◇ increase the use of existing local labour market intelligence to expand the sometimes narrow work-based learning curriculum and, in particular, to expand the uptake and scope of the ApprenticeshipsNI provision in certain key geographical areas;
- ◇ improve the achievements and standards for a minority of the students which are not good enough; and
- ◇ improve essential skills provision, where important weaknesses were identified in the quality of the provision for essential skills in two of the colleges.

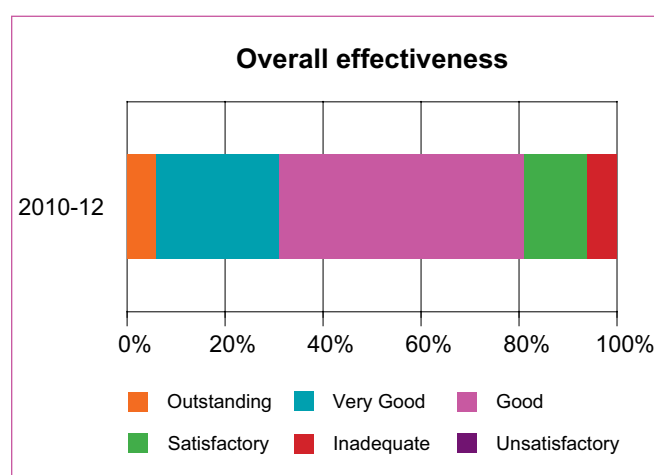
## The quality of the provision in further education

Inspection Evidence	
FE college inspections	2
FE thematic surveys	14
District inspector scrutiny inspections	12
Follow-up inspections	6
Lessons evaluated	766

196. Based on the most current data available (2009-10 to 2010-11), total enrolments on further education professional and technical accredited courses up to level 3 of the National Qualifications Framework and/or Qualifications and Credit Framework decreased by 5% from 151,948 to 144,421<sup>55</sup>. Enrolments at level 2 account for 42% of the total provision; entry level and level 1 for 27%; level 3 for 24%; and higher education for 7%. Part-time provision is significant and accounts for 82% of the total enrolments.

## Overall effectiveness<sup>56</sup>

197. In just over 80% of all the further education provision evaluated (whole-college inspections and thematic surveys), the overall effectiveness was good or better. In those thematic surveys where the outcomes were satisfactory or inadequate, improvements in the quality of the provision were evident during the follow-up inspection process. By the end of the reporting period, almost all of the further education provision inspected was good or better<sup>57</sup>.



55 The Department for Employment and Learning Further Education Statistical Record (FE Recurrent provision plus other Department-funded programmes and cost recovery courses)

56 No comparison with the previous reporting period is valid, as no focused inspections of whole-college provision took place

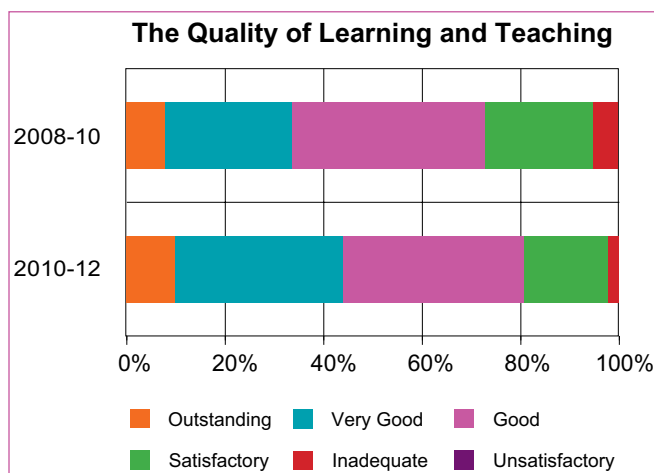
57 Provision which was up to and including level 3 on the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF)

## Achievements and standards

198. The two whole-college inspections show that most students make sound progress towards their target qualification, develop a good range of professional and technical skills and produce high-quality work that frequently matches industry standards. In the most effective practice, the students develop a broad range of industry-relevant practical knowledge and skills, which they apply and use confidently. Across the colleges, the ETI observed good examples of students designing and marketing commercial products, working effectively in a music production team, applying professional standards in early years settings, and preparing and serving high quality food.
  199. Most of the students are well-motivated and develop and apply an appropriate range of employability skills, including good or better communication skills, using their initiative and taking responsibility for their own learning.
- Colleges are focusing increasingly on the development of the students' entrepreneurial skills, through innovative links with employers and participation in internal and external competitions.
200. The achievements and standards for a minority of the students, however, are not good enough. The recurring issues include erratic attendance, poor levels of motivation and disengagement from their learning. Consequently, too many of these students make slow progress or withdraw early from their professional and technical courses.
  201. Based on the Department's data<sup>58</sup>, overall success rates across the sector have increased from 61% in 2009-10 to 70% in 2010-11, due mostly to a significant improvement in achievement rates, which have increased from 70% to 80%. Average retention rates over this period remained steady at around 88%.

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<sup>58</sup> The Department for Employment and Learning Further Education Leavers Survey 2009-10 and 2010-11. On one-year courses, retention is calculated as the percentage of enrolments that complete their programme of study. In the case of two-year courses, it is the percentage of final year enrolments that complete their programme of study. Achievement is the percentage of completers who gain a qualification. In the case of two-year courses, it is the percentage of final year completers who gain a qualification



### The quality of the provision for learning

202. The quality of learning and teaching in most (81%) of the lessons observed was good or better, with a significant minority (44%) of lessons very good or outstanding. The key features of the best practice include: excellent planning; skilful questioning to meet the needs of individual students; the effective use of a broad range of teaching strategies which suitably challenge and motivate the students: and the innovative use of information and learning technology (ILT) to extend and enrich the students' learning experiences. A common feature of these lessons is well-planned, work-related learning activities including appropriate site visits and inspirational guest speakers from industry.

203. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory or inadequate in just under 20% of lessons. These less effective lessons are characterised by: excessive transcription of information by students; limited relevance to current and contemporary industrial practice; and insufficient emphasis on the development and embedding of the students' essential skills. There is insufficient use of ILT in these lessons to engage and motivate the students in their learning.

204. Important weaknesses were identified in the quality of the provision for the essential skills in two of the colleges. While it is clear that managing the needs of such a large and diverse group of students is both challenging and complex, the underpinning cause in both of these colleges was the ineffective leadership and management of the provision. It is encouraging that inspection follow-up activity completed in one of the colleges has identified significant improvements in the leadership and management of the essential skills provision. The improvements include an increased strategic priority for the essential skills provision and an effective 'case conferencing' process to

identify and support students who are under-performing.

205. The further education sector, through the Department's Union Fund, is supporting effectively the essential skills needs of employees in the workplace, including flexible models of delivery.

206. Students have good access to specialist CEIAG services in nearly all of the colleges. These services, however, are not sufficiently integrated into their main professional and technical units or tutorial programmes. As a consequence, too many full-time students are not sufficiently well-informed about the full range of progression pathways available on the successful completion of their courses.

## Leadership and management

207. Leadership and management of the curriculum in the further education colleges inspected is good. The senior leaders have a clear vision for learning and for the important role further education plays in economic

engagement. The effective use of management information informs decision-making increasingly and systematic quality improvement and self-evaluation processes underline the actions needed to address underachievement.

208. In the two colleges inspected, the quality of middle management was very good or better in a majority of the professional and technical areas inspected. The best practice is characterised by a strong and inclusive process of self-evaluation, the effective use of data for internal and external benchmarking, well-developed levels of economic engagement in curriculum development, high expectations for students and staff and effective sharing of best practice within and across campuses.

209. The significant investment in new college facilities is having a positive impact on the students' experiences. The four colleges which participated in the pilot of technology-enhanced blended learning<sup>59</sup> have made good progress in delivering flexible online learning solutions to meet the needs of

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59 Report of an Evaluation of the Blended Learning Pilot in the Further Education Colleges (2011) ETI

individual students and in widening access to further education courses.

210. In the best practice, the colleges' staff development programmes give a high priority to raising the technical and professional expertise of the lecturing staff. They are matched well to curriculum planning and development and to improving the quality of the learning and teaching. One of

the colleges has implemented an excellent mentorship programme to develop the lecturers' use of ILT which has enhanced and improved significantly the quality of teaching, training and learning across the college. Across all of the colleges, however, there are variations in the opportunities for lecturing staff to update their professional and technical skills through appropriate placements in industry.



## Achieving value

211. The further education sector has achieved much in the consolidation and further development of the six regional colleges. While there remains some variation in the overall performance of the colleges, they have embedded well, coherent curriculum management structures and have made significant progress in standardising the business and strategic planning processes. Collaborative partnerships across the colleges, however, should be further developed in the key areas of curriculum development and the sharing of specialist physical and staffing resources in order to meet more effectively the needs of the students and of industry. All of the colleges have established appropriate quality assurance systems, based on the ETI's quality improvement framework<sup>60</sup>, which they use well to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the quality of the provision and identify and address those areas in need of improvement.
212. The range of part-time and full-time courses offered across the further education colleges is wide and includes provision for the essential skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT, along with a key role in the provision of ApprenticeshipsNI programmes. The colleges have a significant part to play in supporting the economic strategy for Northern Ireland to improve the skills and employability of its workforce in order to deliver higher productivity, increase social inclusion and support economic growth.
213. The significant investment in the further education infrastructure, along with their presence within communities, leaves the colleges well placed to lead on the delivery of a high-quality, flexible and economically relevant curriculum.

<sup>60</sup> Improving Quality: Raising Standards (ETI); quality assurance framework for further education and work-based learning

## Learning skills

214. A high-performing and flexible further education sector is vital if the Department is to meet the skills challenges as laid out in the Success through Skills<sup>61</sup> strategy. This requires the sector to contribute by providing the pathways and contemporary skills for young people leaving school, by supporting those already in the workforce to develop their skills and by increasing levels of social inclusion through enhancing the employability of those young people or adults currently excluded from the workforce.
215. There is clear evidence of some good, and gradually increasing, levels of economic engagement across the sector. Inspection evidence indicates, however, that more needs to be done, such as the better use of existing local labour market intelligence to expand the sometimes narrow work-based learning curriculum in the colleges and, in particular, the expansion in the uptake and scope of the ApprenticeshipsNI provision in certain key geographical areas of Northern Ireland. The colleges also need to share the existing good practice in identifying and responding to employers' needs for training and related services. In addition, they should enhance their flexibility in the delivery of short, bespoke training courses for employers.
216. Through the DEL's Innovation Fund: Employer Support Pilot Programme, the colleges have enhanced greatly their support for industry, as well as refreshing their curriculum offer to improve the quality of learning experiences and skills for students. The programme provided more opportunities to enrich the students' curriculum through, for example, real-life commercial projects, good quality work-related learning, more industry-relevant curriculum content, and tailored programmes to support economic development. As a result, one college has benefited through the development of specialist environmental training accommodation and resources, specialist computer-programming staff development and bespoke engineering programmes for existing employees. While the Employer Support Pilot Programme has targeted appropriately the STEM courses, the colleges have more to do in increasing provision in this key area and in those skills areas which are important to the Northern Ireland economy.

61 Success through Skills – Transforming Futures (2011) Department for Employment and Learning

## Transforming communities

217. Equipping young people to contribute to the social and economic regeneration of their local area is an essential part of transforming communities. Across the communities they serve, all of the colleges remain committed to the promotion of diversity, inclusion and a culture of respect.
218. The colleges have made good use of established links with a wide range of appropriate statutory and voluntary agencies to inform planning for social inclusion. They have made good progress in the development and implementation of appropriate policies and procedures, including codes of conduct for staff and students, and in the incorporation of diversity and equal opportunity into induction programmes.
219. Through a wide range of outreach and mainstream adult provision, the colleges provide communities with good access to education and training opportunities at a range of levels. The further education sector is responding positively to the challenging agenda set for them through the Programme for Government 2011-15 and the underpinning Departmental strategies. The highest possible impact on transforming communities will come through supporting young people into employment by providing high quality skills and training in areas of the curriculum that will support economic growth and the strategic rebalancing of the economy.

# Case study

Enhancing the STEM curriculum  
and students' learning experiences



**The issue:** The need to improve the interest in, and uptake of, courses relating to Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and to develop further good working relationships with the school sector in the interest of the learner.

**The action:** An innovative technical centre was developed and specialist staff were deployed in the centre to lead on whole-college curriculum planning conferences, course team reviews and the development of bespoke training courses. Research lecturers from the centre helped the cross-college course teams to develop new and relevant courses, including engineering programmes with specialisms in industrial electronics, motor sports technology and wind turbine technology.

**The impact:** These actions have enhanced the STEM curriculum and learning experiences for the students in the college. Importantly, they have also had a significant impact in promoting interest in STEM-related courses and careers across the education and training system. Around 2,850 young people from 30 schools have participated in a range of relevant and motivational STEM activities in the college.







## Work-based learning

The overall effectiveness of 73% of the supplier organisations inspected was good or better...



# Going Well

The strengths include:

- ◇ the improvements evidenced in the sector, where the overall effectiveness is now good or better in 73% of the organisations inspected;
- ◇ the ApprenticeshipsNI provision which with few exceptions was very good or better in organisations specialising in employer-led programmes such as aircraft fitting and electrical and electronic engineering;
- ◇ the good or better training, where just over three-quarters of the directed and workplace training sessions observed were evaluated as good or better;
- ◇ the significant improvement in the quality of the provision for the essential skills of literacy and numeracy; and
- ◇ the effective, innovative and outward-looking leadership that characterises the best organisations.

# Going Forward

There is a need to:

- ◇ improve the quality of provision in just over one-quarter of the organisations inspected;
- ◇ improve retention rates, which although good overall are much too variable across the provision; and
- ◇ increase the use of ILT to enhance learning; it still remains under-exploited.

## The quality of the provision in work-based learning

Inspection Evidence	
Work-based learning inspections	30
District inspector scrutiny inspections	93
Follow-up inspections	7
Directed training sessions evaluated	884

220. A total of 30,086 learners<sup>62</sup> entered training programmes during the reporting period: 13,431 ApprenticeshipsNI at level 2 and 4,542 at level 3; 12,113 learners registered on Training for Success. The number of female learners has increased over recent years and now represents around 42% of all enrolments. The current priority skills areas<sup>63</sup> account for 37% of the apprentices recruited.

## Overall effectiveness

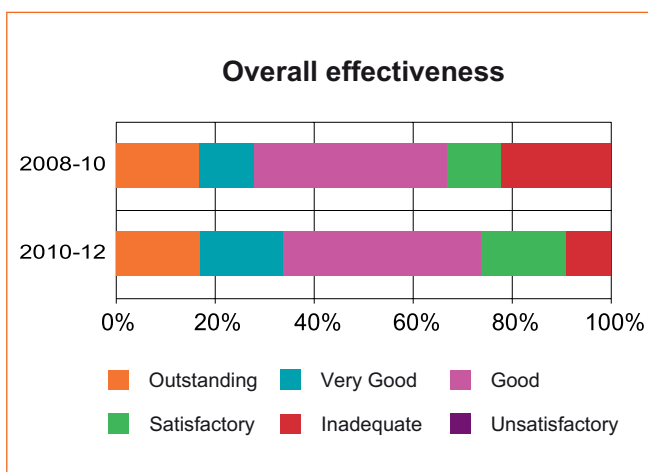
221. The quality of provision was evaluated as good or better in 73% of the supplier organisations inspected, a notable improvement on the previous reporting period of 67%. It was very good or outstanding in 33% of the organisations. In 27% of organisations inspected, there were significant areas for improvement. Seven follow-up inspections were completed. Three organisations improved by two performance levels, two by one performance level and two remained at the same level.

222. The highly-performing organisations were characterised by: effective, innovative and outward-looking leadership; a curriculum matched well to the needs of learners, with the effective integration of the essential skills into the occupational training; practical and theoretical training and learning which engages the learners' interest; and robust processes for self-evaluation and ongoing improvement.

62 The term 'learner' in this section of the report refers to trainees and apprentices

63 The priority skills areas during the reporting period were: computing; software engineering; hospitality, catering and tourism; electronics; construction; and manufacturing engineering  
In July 2012, the Department outlined the economically important sectors needed to rebalance the economy. These are: business services; financial services; food and drink manufacturing; advanced engineering; and the emerging sectors of life and health sciences and the creative industries

223. Within work-based learning, the ApprenticeshipsNI provision was evaluated as outstanding in almost 40% of the organisations specialising in employer-led programmes, for example, in aircraft fitting and electrical and electronic engineering. Typically, these organisations specialise in a small number of professional and technical areas.



## Achievements and standards

224. Achievements and standards are good or better in 77% of the organisations inspected; an improvement when compared with 67% in the last reporting period. The standard of the learners' work is good or better in most of

the organisations inspected. The most effective organisations are characterised by: the focused support provided for individual learners; their high expectations of learners and employers; the good or better levels of attendance at directed training; well-planned opportunities for learners to apply their technical and essential skills in the workplace and the consistently high levels of retention and achievement.

225. The average rate of retention<sup>64</sup> varies considerably across the organisations inspected, but is good overall at 71%. It is highest on the level 3 ApprenticeshipsNI programme at 79%. Retention is lowest on the Skills for Your Life strand of Training for Success at 62%, but was evaluated as good at 68% on the Skills for Work strand and satisfactory at 64% on the Programme-Led Apprenticeship strand.

226. Overall achievement rates<sup>65</sup> are good at 81%. On the Training for Success programme, 83% of the trainees who were retained

<sup>64</sup> The rate of retention is the proportion of learners enrolled in year one of the programme who complete their programme of study or occupational training framework

<sup>65</sup> The achievement rate is the proportion of learners who complete their programme of study or occupational training framework and who achieve fully their qualification

achieved their target qualifications and, on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme, 79% of the apprentices who were retained achieved the full apprenticeship framework.

### The quality of the provision for learning

227. The quality of provision for learning improved over the period; it is good or better in 77% of the organisations inspected, compared with 61% in the previous reporting period.

228. A majority of the organisations inspected offer an appropriate range of training. Where the curriculum offer is most effective, there is close collaboration and partnership working with employers and other providers. Such collaboration extends the learning experiences for the learners and enhances their employment and progression opportunities.

229. Around 78% of the directed and workplace training sessions observed were evaluated as good or better, a noticeable improvement on the previous reporting period (70%). The learners are motivated by: practical training

and learning in which they play an active part; good opportunities to apply their learning at work or in realistic work-related contexts; and access to high specification, industry-standard equipment and resources. Most of the more effective organisations give a high priority to providing support for learners in order to minimise barriers to learning and progress.

230. The achievement of an essential skills qualification at level 2 significantly enhances the learners' employment opportunities, and the reporting period has seen a significant improvement in the overall quality of the provision for the essential skills of literacy and numeracy. It is good or better in 76% of the organisations inspected compared with 60% in the previous reporting period.

231. Despite these improvements, in around 25% of the organisations inspected, the essential skills provision is satisfactory or less. These organisations make insufficient use of data to plan for and track improvements in the learners' essential skills. The essential skills are not taught alongside the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ), with the result

that learners and employers do not see their relevance to work. More learners have the ability to achieve their essential skills at a level higher than that required by their framework, but they are not being facilitated sufficiently to do so.

232. In the more effective organisations, the personal training plan process is used well for monitoring and tracking the learners' progress and in the setting of meaningful, individualised targets. This process needs to be strengthened in a significant minority of training supplier organisations. The use of ILT to enhance learning remains at an early stage of development in almost all of the work-based learning organisations. The innovative use of ILT was observed in very few organisations inspected.
233. Almost all of the organisations inspected have appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures in place. Most have good or better arrangements in place for the care, guidance and support of learners.

### Leadership and management

234. The quality of leadership and management of the work-based

learning provision has improved. In just under 67% of the organisations inspected, the quality of the leadership and management is good or better compared with 60% in the last reporting period. The number of organisations where leadership and management is outstanding increased from 16% to 23%, while those evaluated as inadequate or below declined from 22% to 10%.

235. In the organisations where the leadership and management is most effective, the key characteristics include: a strong focus on continuous improvement through the robust embedding of self-evaluation; effective use of data; high expectations of learners and staff; a high priority given to the integration of the essential skills into the occupational training; and good monitoring of learners' progress through the personal training plan process. There are areas for improvement in around one-third of the organisations inspected. In particular these organisations give too low a priority to improving the quality of provision.

236. In a minority (17%) of the organisations inspected, the

accommodation and resources are not good enough, in particular for trainees on the Training for Success programme. Training premises are often situated in out-of-town locations, which are difficult for learners to reach and have too few facilities. In addition, they lack adequate investment

in industry-standard equipment and are often uninspiring learning environments. Serious health and safety issues, in engineering programmes, were identified in a small number (7%) of the organisations inspected and these were addressed quickly.

## Achieving value

237. In the less effective (27%) organisations, the provision does not meet adequately the needs of the learners. Outcomes and standards are too low or inconsistent, leadership and management have significant areas for improvement and self-evaluation and quality assurance arrangements are weak, including the poor oversight arrangements of the work of sub-contracting organisations. The curriculum for Training for Success learners is restricted, in particular through a lack of good quality work placements.

238. The current economic climate continues to have a detrimental impact on recruitment to some areas of the ApprenticeshipsNI programme which were identified

as priority skills during the period covered by the report, such as construction and engineering. However, the programme continues to support the key overarching government strategies including Success through Skills and the Northern Ireland Economic Strategy<sup>66</sup>, important strands of which are to improve the skills, employability and productivity of the workforce.

239. An additional adverse outcome of the current economic climate is the higher proportion of learners on the Programme-Led Apprenticeship strand of Training for Success as opposed to the ApprenticeshipsNI programme, particularly in areas such as engineering and construction. Progression rates to apprenticeships remain low for those learners who complete their Programme-Led Apprenticeship.

<sup>66</sup> Economic Strategy – Priorities for sustainable growth and prosperity (March 2012) Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment



## Learning skills

240. Supporting young people into employment by providing them with skills and training is a key commitment of the Programme for Government 2011-15. In 2010-11, nearly 15% of 16-17 year olds in full-time education and/or vocational training attended a Training for Success programme<sup>67</sup>. Many of these young people leave the post-primary sector with low levels of prior achievement and significant deficits in their literacy, numeracy and other skills. The majority of tutors across the work-based learning sector work hard to re-engage these young people. They provide good levels of support and encouragement. In particular, they endeavour to develop learners' confidence and, most importantly, their literacy and numeracy skills to improve their employability.

241. Through its strategy Success through Skills, the Department

has identified the need for more people with higher level skills within the workforce. Given that around 75% of the 2020 workforce have already completed their compulsory education, there is a clear need for an intense and ongoing focus on upskilling or reskilling of the workforce. Appropriately, the Department has aligned its focus in this work to the economic strategy for Northern Ireland and resources for adult apprenticeships and training are being targeted specifically on the identified priority skills needs of the local economy.

242. The more effective work-based learning organisations provide learners with clear progression routes to further training, education and sustained employment. However, better sector-wide data is required to demonstrate clearly the extent of this progression across the sector and to facilitate better benchmarking of performance by the supplier organisations in their self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes.

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<sup>67</sup> Participation in Full-time Education and Vocational Training by 16 and 17 olds in Northern Ireland 2010/11 (Departments of Education and Employment and Learning, 2011)

## Transforming communities

243. The number of young people aged 16 to 24 that fall within the Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET) category is high at around 46,000 and is growing. The NEET strategy<sup>68</sup> recognises the urgency of addressing this issue to ensure young people do not face a lifetime of limited opportunity characterised by worklessness, poverty and reduced life chances. A lack of training or skills and qualifications related to the needs of the labour market are a major impediment to the social inclusion of young people.

Work-based learning plays a crucial role in promoting social inclusion, especially through the provision of relevant training programmes which develop and accredit learners' technical, personal and essential skills, making them more employable.

244. The evidence is clear that, once engaged in appropriate training programmes in supportive learning environments with good workplace relevance, positive changes in the learners' self-confidence and work-readiness take place, along with much more constructive attitudes towards learning and further education or training.

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<sup>68</sup> Pathways to Success: Strategy for Young People not in Education, Training or Employment, Department for Employment and Learning (2012)

# Case study

Using technology to support the apprenticeship programme



**The issue:** A supplier organisation specialising in ApprenticeshipsNI provision saw the need to improve the use of technology to promote and support the delivery of the apprenticeship programme.

**The action:** The organisation set up a secure off-site electronic document storage system, and an online apprenticeship application process, including appropriate facilities for self-assessment, which are both linked to the management information system. In addition, they established an effective electronic portfolio system, and a comprehensive website with relevant blogs, videos, advice, support and guidance.

**The impact:** The management information system is used effectively to record, monitor and manage all aspects of apprenticeship training. The document storage system provides secure storage of all apprentice information combined with fast online access and search tools which record efficiently the apprentices' progress and achievements.



## Adult employment programmes (Steps to Work)

The overall effectiveness of 80% of the Steps to Work adult employment programmes was evaluated as good or better...

# Going Well

The strengths include:

- ◇ the overall effectiveness of the Steps to Work programme which is good or better in eight of the ten lead contractors, and satisfactory in the remaining two;
- ◇ based on the DEL data, approximately 60% of the lead contractors are meeting the DEL's current target for participants attaining sustained employment;
- ◇ the marked improvement in the quality of support provided by most lead contractors to enhance the work-readiness and employability skills of the participants;
- ◇ the good progress made by most of the participants in developing their motivation for work, confidence and self-esteem to enable them to improve their transferable and personal skills; and
- ◇ the innovative strategies used to improve the quantity and quality of work experience placements that are likely to lead to employment, which are most prevalent where leadership and management are very good or outstanding.

# Going Forward

There is a need to:

- ◇ continue the upward trend and promote improvements in the significant minority of lead contractors that have not met the DEL's current target for the programme;
- ◇ develop the self-evaluation arrangements and quality improvement planning in a minority of the lead contractors; and
- ◇ support more lead contractors to implement innovative strategies to increase the quantity and quality of work experience placements that are likely to lead to employment.



## The quality of the provision in adult employment programmes (Steps to Work)

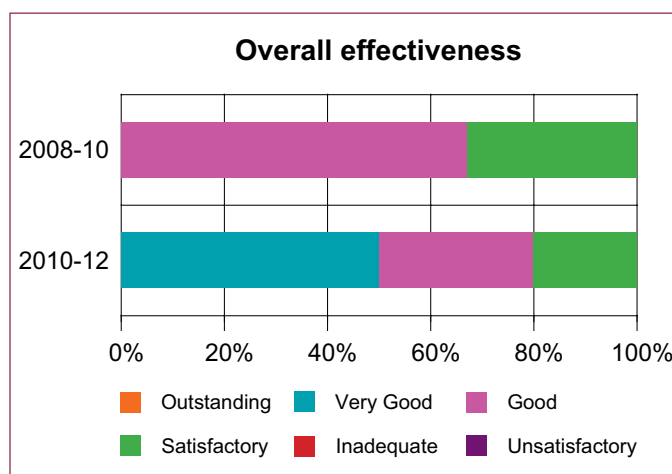
Inspection Evidence	
Steps to Work inspections	12
Steps to Work evaluations	1
District inspector scrutiny inspections	20
Follow-up inspections	1
Lessons evaluated	253

245. The Steps to Work<sup>69</sup> adult employment programme was introduced in September 2008 and its aim is to assist people who are unemployed or economically inactive to find and sustain employment. All of the current lead contractors responsible for leading and managing Steps to Work across the ten regional contract areas have been inspected during the 2010-2012 reporting period<sup>70</sup>.

### Overall effectiveness

246. The overall effectiveness of the Steps to Work adult employment programme is good or better in eight of the ten lead contractors, and satisfactory in the remaining two.

247. The economic downturn has led to a significant rise in the number of participants on the Steps to Work programme across Northern Ireland, up from 8,679 in March 2010 to 18,711 in March 2012<sup>71</sup>. At the same time, the declining number of notified job vacancies is an additional challenge for each of the lead contractors.



69 Steps to Work is delivered in ten geographic contract areas across Northern Ireland, each of which has a lead contractor organisation and a number of specialist sub-contractors. Lead contractors are appointed through a public tender process. There are three steps to the provision. The step two provision, includes for example, essential skills learning, back to work, qualifications, self-employment and enhanced support

70 Steps to Work was introduced during the previous reporting period. Consequently only three contract areas were inspected in 2008-2010. In the current period, two contract areas were inspected twice due to the relatively short inspection cycle of Steps to Work

71 Steps to Work Statistical Bulletin (June, 2012)



## Achievements and standards

248. There is a marked improvement in the quality of support provided by most lead contractors to enhance the work-readiness and employability skills of the participants. Increased numbers of participants are leaving the main Steps to Work strands and are finding and sustaining work for 13 weeks or more across most of the contract areas<sup>72</sup>. Despite the upward trend, a significant minority of lead contractors have not met the DEL's target of 13 weeks' sustained employment for participants leaving the Steps to Work programme<sup>73</sup>. The outcomes from the self-employment strand are very good with 51% of the relatively small number of leavers finding and sustaining work for 13 weeks or more.
249. Across the lead contractors, most of the participants make good progress in developing their motivation for work. They have improved levels of confidence and the self-esteem to acquire

appropriate work-readiness, transferable and personal skills.

## The quality of the provision for learning

250. The quality of training and services is good or very good across eight of the contract areas. Of the 253 directed training sessions observed, most were good or better. Most of the participants receive good specialist and essential skills training which provides them with the skills, knowledge and qualifications to progress towards sustained employment.
251. The good quality of most of the Core Gateway<sup>74</sup> provision equips participants with initial employment-related support, advice and guidance, which helps them to make informed choices about progression to other Steps to Work strands. Most of the participants benefit from work experience placements which are matched well to their individual needs and where employers are supportive.

72 The overall 'sustained employment for 13 weeks or more' rate increased from 14% during the period September 2008 to December 2009, to 19% in September 2011. Source: the Steps to Work quarterly statistical bulletins first published in September 2010

73 From 1 April 2011, the Department revised its target for lead contractors from 25% of participants attaining sustained employment for 13 weeks or more to 22% due to the economic climate

74 Core Gateway is a short course consisting of modules that help participants identify and apply for work in which they are interested

252. Most participants are provided with good encouragement by the lead contractors, sub-contractors and the Department's employment service advisers. In a minority of contract areas, a small number of participants received particularly good support on the confidence and motivation module to overcome personal barriers to employment.
253. One-half of lead contractors and many sub-contractors do not make effective enough use of personal plans towards employment to record the barriers to work for participants, essential skills needs or to plan, monitor and review their progress and achievements. As a result, a minority of the participants do not receive the most appropriate provision to meet their needs, restricting their opportunities to progress to employment.

### Leadership and management

254. Eight of the ten lead contractors provide good to outstanding leadership and management of the Steps to Work provision; it is satisfactory in the remainder. Among the four lead contractors where leadership and management are very good or outstanding, innovative strategies are used to improve the quantity and quality of work experience placements that are likely to lead to employment. Most of the lead contractors have good collaborative working relationships with sub-contractors and other important stakeholders.
255. Self-evaluation arrangements and quality improvement planning remain underdeveloped in a minority of the lead contractors. In particular, data is not used effectively to monitor key performance indicators or to identify and address significant shortcomings in the provision.

## Achieving value

256. A key test of value for the Steps to Work adult employability programme is how successful the ten lead contractors are in assisting jobseekers to find and sustain employment. Based upon data supplied by the Department, it is encouraging to note that 60% of the lead contractors are meeting the Department's current target for the programme.

257. The economic downturn and related rise in unemployment provide further challenges. As a consequence, there are unacceptably long waiting lists for participants to join Steps to Work in a significant minority of contract areas. To address these issues, most lead contractors need to implement more innovative strategies to increase the quantity and quality of work experience placements that are likely to lead to employment.

## Learning skills

258. Progression into employment is higher on the qualifications and self-employment strands of the Steps to Work programme. However, the largest proportion of participants is on the back to work strand. As the skills levels of many participants on this strand are low, finding sustainable employment is more difficult.

259. Employers and participants report that the biggest barriers to finding

and sustaining employment are poor levels of literacy and numeracy, low confidence and lack of recent experience in a relevant workplace. The challenge for the lead contractors, working in collaboration with the Jobs and Benefits office or JobCentre Advisers, is to identify these barriers early and to provide participants with the most appropriate programme of support, skills development and work experience to meet their individual needs.

## Transforming communities

260. Success through Skills, the skills strategy for Northern Ireland, identifies the need to raise levels of social inclusion through better skills that provide a route to stable employment and long-term prosperity as well as personal development and fulfilment. Consequently, the Steps to Work programme has the potential to transform the lives of these individuals and the communities in which they live.

261. Lead contractors, along with the staff in the Jobs and Benefits offices and JobCentres, have a crucial role to play in supporting and encouraging those adults most removed from employment. Many of these participants have inadequate skill levels, low confidence and self-esteem and are often disengaged from economic activity, education or training. These participants would benefit significantly from improved access to enhanced support, in order to help them to find work and to contribute towards the regeneration of their communities and the economy.



# Case study

## Improving the quality assurance procedures of a lead contractor



**The issue:** A lead contractor identified the need to develop their existing quality assurance systems in order to lead to further improvement in the quality of provision.

**The action:** The lead contractor established a quality and compliance unit. As a consequence, very good use was made of management information data to inform the quality assurance arrangements which were underpinned by the provision of excellent support and guidance by the lead contractor. An example of this support was the facilitation by the lead contractor of an event for the sub-contractors to share good practice across the Jobsearch provision.

**The impact:** The process was very well planned and included rigorous evaluations by the lead contractor of the quality of the work carried out by the sub-contractors. These arrangements included tutor observations undertaken by the lead contractor's staff and have been well accepted by the sub-contractors. Informative feedback, including any areas for improvement was provided to the sub-contractors, while follow-up action verified that improvement had taken place.





## Youth

The overall effectiveness of almost 75% of all the youth service provision evaluated was good or better...



# Going Well

The strengths include:

- ◇ the improvements in youth provision, where overall effectiveness was evaluated as good or better in almost 75% of provision during this reporting period;
- ◇ the improvement evidenced at the follow-up inspections, in which four out of six organisations inspected, improved by more than one performance level;
- ◇ the quality of the achievements and standards of the young people which were good or better in 84% of the organisations inspected;
- ◇ the development of effective participative structures for young people; and
- ◇ the significant added value to the youth sector that volunteers continue to provide.

# Going Forward

There is a need to:

- ◇ to embed further the use of self-evaluation to promote improvement;
- ◇ to develop further the partnerships between the youth sector and formal education to ensure that provision is planned for, and managed, more strategically; and
- ◇ to address the shortcomings in the continuous professional development for full-time youth workers; in particular additional support is required for those at the start of their career and for those whose practice is less than good.

## The quality of the provision in the youth sector

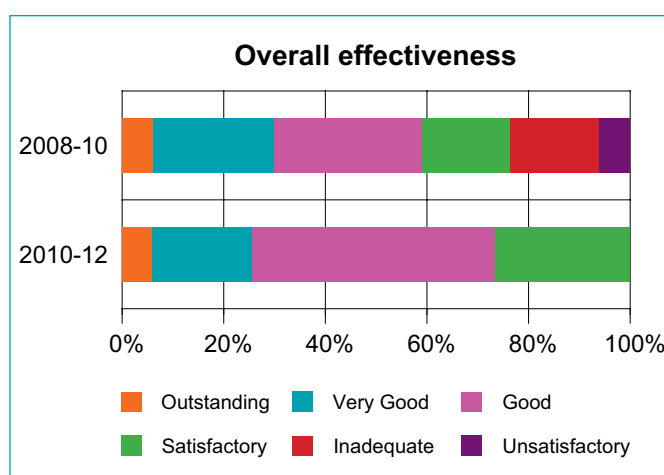
Inspection Evidence	
Area inspections	8
Youth centre inspections	14
Outdoor education inspections	3
Follow-up inspections	6
Sessions evaluated	236

### Overall effectiveness

262. The overall effectiveness of almost 75% of the youth service provision inspected was evaluated as good or better; an improvement from the previous reporting period. The overall effectiveness of the provision of one of the ELB areas and one of the outdoor education centres was evaluated as outstanding. There were no inadequate or unsatisfactory evaluations across the area, youth centre and outdoor education inspections, . Six follow-up inspections were conducted during the reporting period and four organisations improved by more than one performance level.

263. The youth service prioritises and uses effectively its resources; inspection evidence indicates that the sector has been highly successful in attracting additional resources to enrich young people's experiences.

264. Since the last reporting period, there has been extensive consultation with the youth sector in the preparation for the new Priorities for Youth policy document. The public consultation period finishes in December 2012. The ETI will continue to evaluate and report on the quality of youth provision as Priorities for Youth is developed further during the next reporting period.



## Achievements and standards

265. The quality of the achievements and standards of the young people was good or better in 84% of the organisations inspected. In the best practice, the young people are fully involved in a range of volunteering opportunities and participate in the youth work structures at centre and area level. As a result of their participation, they acquire excellent peer leadership and advocacy skills. The development of effective participative structures for young people was a significant strength in the majority of the youth organisations inspected.
266. In most of the organisations inspected, a high number of young people and volunteers achieved appropriate youth work qualifications. In addition, significant value is added in those non-accredited group work programmes, which meet well the personal, social and developmental needs of the young people.
267. In the outstanding practice evaluated in outdoor education, the highly-skilled instructors worked effectively with teachers, youth workers and the young people to

provide a high-quality, challenging learning environment. The young people demonstrated clear progression in their knowledge, skills and understanding of outdoor environments. The schools and the outdoor education centres need to work more collaboratively to improve further the planning for, and the evaluation of, the learning outcomes for the young people.

## The quality of the provision for learning

268. The quality of the youth work was evaluated as very good or outstanding in almost 50% of the sessions observed. In these sessions there was a wide range of age-appropriate activities and personal development programmes. In the less effective practice, the youth workers did not manage well the young people with additional learning needs and those with challenging behaviours.
269. While a majority of the part-time staff and the volunteers receive good training in the role and purpose of youth work, there are shortcomings in the continuous professional development for full-time youth workers. In particular, additional support is required for

those at the start of their career and for those whose practice is less than good.

### Leadership and management

- 270. Senior management across most of the sector provides good or better strategic leadership. As the new priorities in the youth sector evolve, it will be important for the youth providers and other education professionals to plan strategically in the best interests of the young people with whom they work.
- 271. Self-evaluation processes have improved significantly in this

reporting period. However, the use of self-evaluation to effect improvement needs to be embedded further. The majority of the business and development plans evaluated do not reflect consistently the outcomes for the young people and the means of quality assuring the provision. The absence of robust data and the rigorous analysis of such data to inform the youth sector about the achievements of young people remains a challenge. Within the voluntary youth centres inspected, the training and support for management committees remains an area for further improvement.

### Achieving value

- 272. In the most effective youth settings, the young people benefit from personal and social development; they develop greater emotional

resilience and self-confidence, and are equipped well to deal with the challenges they face as young adults. It is of particular note that over 500 young people successfully completed good relations and cultural diversity programmes.

## Learning skills

273. In a world of increasing challenges, including those related to mental health, relationship issues and risks associated with the internet, the youth sector provides good support

for young people in acquiring and developing appropriate life-skills. The partnerships with the formal education sector remain underdeveloped; they do not enable young people to make appropriate connections between their formal and informal education experiences.

## Transforming communities

274. The youth sector continues to depend on the support of large numbers of volunteers who provide significant support for the young people from their local community. The part-time youth workers and the volunteers from local communities are good role models. They know well the young people and the challenges which they face; they instil in many of the young

people a pride in their community and the desire to make a positive contribution to it.

275. Most youth workers provide very good opportunities for the young people to engage well with their peers and a range of diverse groups and individuals from the local and global communities. Often young people are encouraged to develop advocacy skills and represent themselves and their communities in a range of settings.

# Case study

## Supporting participation in a youth setting



**The issue:** A key principle of youth work is the active engagement of young people in effective participative structures. The need to improve this area was identified by the leadership and management of the organisation.

**The action:** The leadership consulted widely with a range of stakeholders and reviewed and developed their participative structures. The more experienced young people facilitated sessions for other members and became positive role models, with a well-developed understanding of the role and purpose of youth councils, including interacting with political representatives.

**The impact:** The young people's understanding of, and commitment to, the process of participation and inclusion has improved significantly and they participate in mature discussions around sensitive subject areas. These young people are now able to engage more fully in the local political process and have recommended changes to help transform their local communities for the better.







## **Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure provision**

The overall effectiveness of 90% of the organisations sponsored by DCAL were evaluated as good or better...

# Going Well

The strengths include:

- ◇ the overall effectiveness which was good or better in most of the organisations inspected;
- ◇ the quality of the outcomes for learners in most of the organisations which was evaluated as good or better;
- ◇ the satisfactory or good progress made in using the quality indicators by a majority of the DCAL sponsored bodies;
- ◇ the good range of learning strategies, age-related activities and use of ICT; and
- ◇ the quality of leadership and management which was good or better in most of the organisations inspected.

# Going Forward

There is a need to:

- ◇ improve outcomes for learners in 33% of the provision evaluated;
- ◇ develop the quality of the planning by the sponsored bodies for implementing the learning strategy, given that there are still variations; and
- ◇ embed further the self-evaluation processes in order to monitor progress and to inform future planning in a minority of organisations.

**The quality of the provision in organisations sponsored by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure**

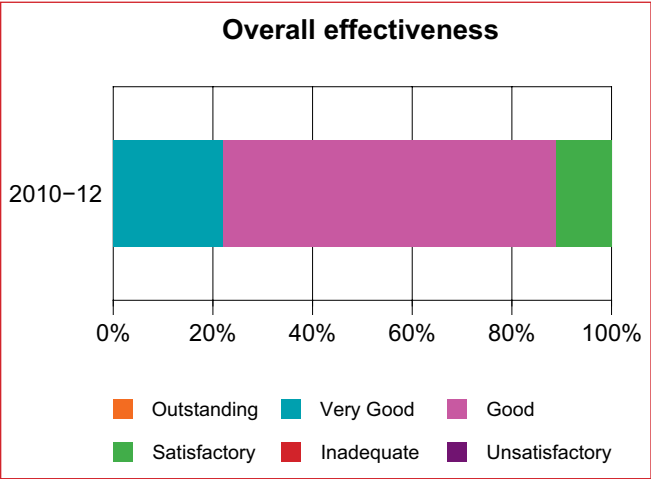
Inspection Evidence	
Final evaluation of the embedding of the quality indicators <sup>75</sup>	6
Other evaluations <sup>76</sup>	4

**Overall effectiveness**

276. The overall effectiveness of most of the organisations inspected is good or very good. During the reporting period, the main inspection work has centred on the further promotion of the DCAL learning strategy and of the more consistent use of the agreed quality indicators<sup>77</sup>. The overall evaluation of the embedding of

the quality indicators, published in October 2011<sup>78</sup>, indicates that the majority of the bodies sponsored by DCAL have made a satisfactory or good start in the use of the quality indicators to improve the educational provision for their learners.

277. The DCAL’s planning for the implementation of its learning strategy, includes appropriate actions to develop further the wide range of work within and across the sponsored bodies to promote life-long learning and economic growth.



75 Libraries NI, National Museums NI, Armagh planetarium, W5, Armagh observatory; and the Arts Council NI

76 An evaluation of the promotion of critical skills as part of a Wider Literacy through four organisations funded by NI Screen; an evaluation of the learning outcomes for users of the Public Services of the Public Record Office of NI Part 2; an inspection of the music programme funded by the Ulster-Scots Agency; and a baseline evaluation of the STEM related support provided by National Museums NI in the delivery of the NIC

77 In 2008-09, DCAL commissioned the ETI to develop a learning strategy and to develop further, in consultation with the organisations, the quality indicators used by the ETI, leading to the development of guidance on their application and the sharing of best practice. The aim was for the organisations to use the ensuing strategy and quality indicators to review, develop and quality assure their educational provision

78 A final evaluation of the embedding of the quality indicators in those bodies sponsored by the DCAL (ETI, 2011)



## Achievements and standards

278. The quality of the outcomes for learners in most of the organisations was evaluated as good or better. Most of the learners participate enthusiastically in the activities; they display high levels of motivation, commitment and enjoyment. They develop their skills, creativity and knowledge across a wide range of relevant curriculum areas, including literacy. The learners work well together to improve their teamwork and their ability to solve problems in different contexts.

## The quality of the provision for learning

279. The quality of the provision for learning across all of the organisations inspected was evaluated as good or very good. The learning is enjoyable and effective and complements the work of the formal sector. The knowledge and skills of the participants are extended through practical activities.

280. The organisations use a good range of strategies and age-appropriate activities, including the effective use

of high quality ICT and innovative approaches to learning, to engage the learners' interest. The provision which includes film studies, arts-based and science-based activities and local history enriches the learners' experiences.

281. Well-conceived staff development opportunities are used by the majority of organisations. On occasions, they train others such as student teachers to connect the informal learning more closely to the formal curriculum, particularly in areas such as STEM.

282. Most of the sponsored organisations have developed further their partnerships with external agencies to avail of resources and expertise, resulting in enhanced learning for everyone. Increasingly, the organisations are developing more overt links with their counterparts within the DCAL to provide more coherent provision for the learners. These links could be improved by better curriculum connections and more effective planning, with and by teachers, to develop the learners' skills.

## Leadership and management

283. Leadership and management are good or very good in most of the organisations. All of the sponsored bodies are now aware of the DCAL learning strategy and the quality indicators. The sponsored bodies have begun to implement them, in varying degrees, through their individual learning strategies. The DCAL learning co-ordinator has provided good support through initiatives such as the learning forum which allows the sponsored organisations to learn from each other and to work collaboratively where possible.
284. Learning from the experience of their counterparts, several organisations have used the quality indicators to inform their planning and to introduce a more effective process of monitoring and evaluating the quality of the provision. This process continues to be extended across the organisations themselves and, in particular, across groups which are funded directly by bodies sponsored by the DCAL.
285. The majority of the sponsored organisations have introduced more self-evaluation processes into their work and continue to build on good practice. They use quantitative evidence to inform their self-evaluation processes and, increasingly, are taking into account a range of qualitative evidence. The organisations need to embed further the self-evaluation processes to monitor progress and to inform future planning.





## Achieving value

286. In the majority of the sponsored organisations, the learners achieve good outcomes. The range of

learning experiences complements the learning in the formal sector. In one-third of the work evaluated, the sponsored organisations need to make more effective use of the quality indicators to demonstrate the added value for the learner.

## Learning skills

287. The learners develop skills such as decision-making and working together in the activities facilitated by the majority of sponsored organisations. To enable the further development of these skills, the

sponsored organisations and the teachers need to work together to plan for better connections to the curriculum. Currently they do not exploit fully the opportunities for the further development of competences, including wider literacy, numeracy and STEM-related skills.

## Transforming communities

288. The majority of the organisations support well the development of a range of skills necessary for life-long learning. Many of the history, arts, and film-based activities develop the learners'

understanding of themselves and of others. In order to promote good relations within and between communities further, the work of the sponsored organisations needs to focus clearly on developing the learners' capacity to think critically, be creative and work well with others.



## **Inspection Services provided for the Criminal Justice Inspection and for the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development**

During the reporting period, ETI provided inspection services for the Criminal Justice Inspection (CJI) and for the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD). The work, in each case, is guided by a Memorandum of Understanding and, on a yearly basis, by a Service Level Agreement.

## **Inspection Services provided for the Criminal Justice Inspection**

289. For CJI, an unannounced inspection of the learning and skills provision was carried out in Maghaberry prison in March 2012. Short unannounced follow-up inspections were carried out in Hydebank Wood Women's Prison and Hydebank Wood Young Offenders Centre in March 2011. In addition, a summary report was published in early 2012<sup>79</sup>.
290. The quality and impact of the learning and skills provision in the prisons inspected was not good enough to meet the needs of the prisoners. While the quality of the learning and skills in Maghaberry was satisfactory overall, there were significant deficits in the extent and quality of some of the provision. In Hydebank Wood, too little progress in addressing the many necessary areas for improvement was being made and this prison was performing poorly in terms of meeting the learning and skills needs of the women prisoners and young offenders.
291. Some good work takes place in the prisons. This includes: the good or better provision for physical education; an increased emphasis on flexible provision to improve the prisoners' literacy and numeracy skills; the generally good quality of teaching, training and learning in most lessons; better access by prisoners to improved library facilities and resources; and, the good standards of most of the prisoners' work in essential skills and in vocational training courses. There has been investment in the quality of accommodation and equipment, which is very good in physical education and an excellent new learning and skills centre has been established in Maghaberry.
292. The education and skills deficits of prisoners in Northern Ireland are significant, with a majority of them assessed as below the minimum required level in their essential skills of literacy and/or numeracy. Too few prisoners are being helped

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<sup>79</sup> Learning and Skills Provision by the Northern Ireland Prison Service, joint report (CJI and ETI, February, 2012)

to address their learning and skills deficits and they are therefore not being prepared adequately to compete for employment on release. The learning and skills capacity in the prisons inspected remains underutilised. Across the prisons, the curricular offer is dated, provision for ICT is wholly inadequate and participation levels by prisoners in learning and skills are too low. In addition, regime restrictions continue to have an adverse impact on classes and

there are insufficient purposeful work activities for the prisoners. The key recommendation of the joint summary report was that the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) should consider outsourcing the learning and skills provision to enable greater flexibility and quality across the system. The findings and recommendations from the inspections of learning and skills in Northern Ireland prisons match closely those of the Prison Review Team<sup>80</sup>.

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80 Review of the Northern Ireland Prison Service: Prison Review Team Final Report (2011)



## **Inspection Services provided for the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development**

293. An inspection of the Industry Training Programme was carried out in 2011 for the DARD and an inspection of a majority of the Axis 1 measures of the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme was carried out in 2012<sup>81</sup>. The aim of the Industry Training Programme is to develop the skills and competences of people working in the land-based and food industries to enable them to develop and manage sustainable, competitive businesses. The evaluation found that the leadership and the management of the programme are very good, with effective use made of links with industry in order to identify the training needs and to inform planning. As a result, a wide range of relevant courses are provided through the training

programme which meets well the needs of the industry and provides good opportunities for the learners to gain accreditation at a range of levels. The quality of the training delivered is mostly very good or better and the learners achieve very good standards of work. The programme could be strengthened through the development of further strategies to encourage reluctant learners to participate in the training provision and through better self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes.

294. Axis 1 of the Rural Development Programme aims to raise the competitiveness of farms and the evaluation looked at three of the programmes within this: focus farms, farm family options and supply chain development. The evaluation showed that the leadership and management of the programmes by the lead contractor is good. The training and learning observed was always of a good or better quality and the facilitators, mentors and focus farmers<sup>82</sup> are

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81 An evaluation of Axis 1 measures of the Northern Ireland rural development programme 2011-12 (ETI, 2012)

82 Focus farm programme: aims to contribute to the competitiveness of agricultural and horticultural businesses through farmer-led training. This includes demonstrating good farming practice, the use of modern technology and innovative farming methods, and on-farm research  
Family farm options: aims to strengthen the competitiveness of the farming families through training and mentoring.  
Supply chain development: aims to help producers establish a culture of collaboration between themselves and relevant processors and retailers in the supply chain

credible, well-experienced and highly committed. The evidence is clear that there is a good transfer of knowledge between the participants and facilitators, mentors and focus farmers and that almost all of the participants value their experiences and outcomes on the programmes. The evaluation identified some actions required to bring about improvement in the programmes, including the need for a more coherent and strategic approach between the various policy makers

and the rural agencies to inform and support rural development in Northern Ireland. The procedures and protocols related to the Axis 1 measures are bureaucratic and impact adversely on the management of the contract. In addition, the evaluation identified the urgent need for the provision of relevant training and development opportunities for farming families through access to an appropriate skills training programme.







## Inspection leading to improvement

The work of the ETI is guided by its mission, 'promoting improvement in the interest of all learners'...

## Inspection leading to improvement

295. The work of the ETI is guided by its mission, 'promoting improvement in the interest of all learners'. It is important that every child and young person is able to achieve to their full potential, and to do so, the education and training that they attend and participate in must be of the best possible quality.
296. Inspection promotes improvement by providing an external, professional perspective on the quality of provision. As well as confirming strengths, inspection identifies areas for improvement; it promotes the sharing of good practice through the publication of inspection and survey reports and district inspector activities; it provides reassurance, for example, to parents and carers of the quality of education their child is receiving; and, provides independent feedback to the departments of the effectiveness of their policies.
297. Inspection evidence shows that effective self-evaluation is key to the quality improvement process. A central feature of the work of organisations whose level of performance has been evaluated as either very good or outstanding, and of those organisations that improved during the Follow-up process, is effective self-evaluation which informs improvement.
298. Key features of improving organisations are: the development of effective leadership and management; better teaching and learning; higher expectations of what the learners can achieve, supported by strong pastoral support; and a collegial approach to improvement which includes all the organisation's staff, the governors, parents and the learners themselves.
299. This report has highlighted many examples where improvements have taken place, including instances where organisations overcome economic and social disadvantage. The most effective organisations have a clear focus on achieving value through optimising the use of all their resources and raising standards to achieve the best possible outcomes for all learners. These organisations enable learners to acquire and develop the skills needed to progress to their next stage of learning, training or employment. As such, these education and training providers serve well their learners and the communities to which they belong.





**Promoting improvement in the  
interest of all learners**



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